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# THE NEW YORKER

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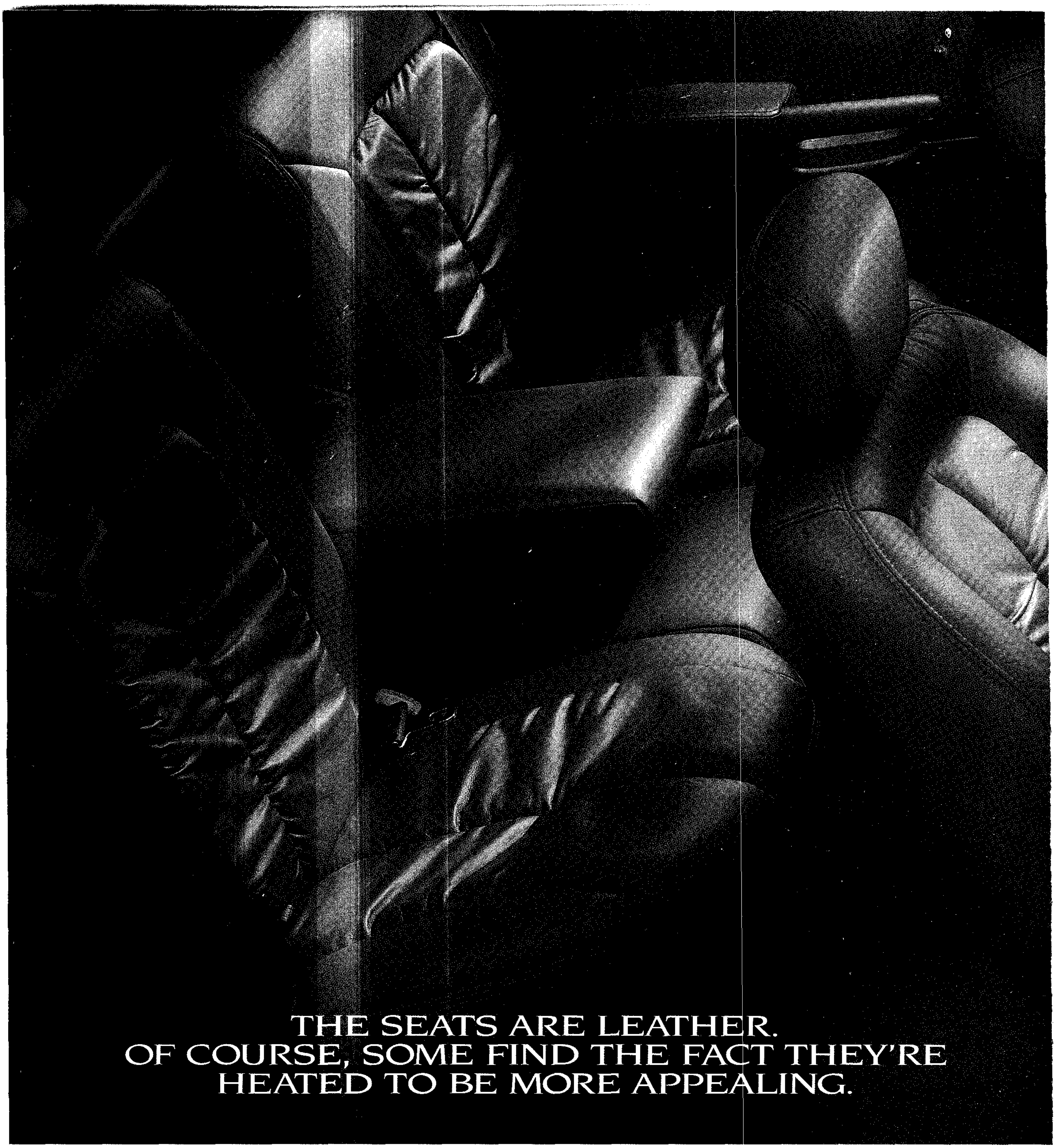
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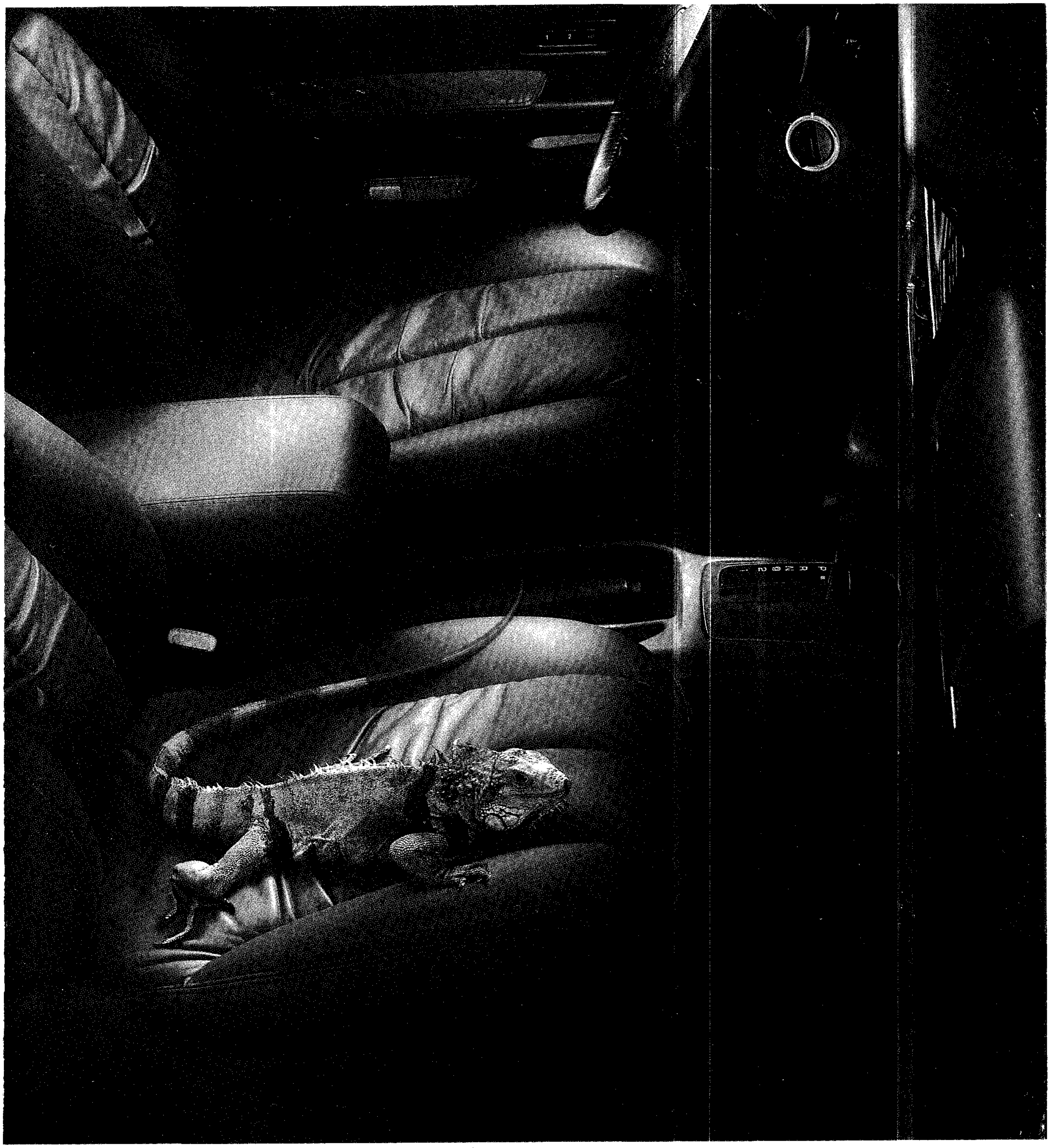

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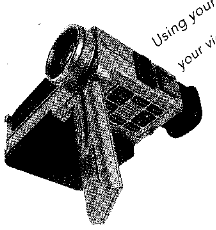

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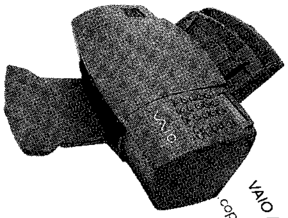

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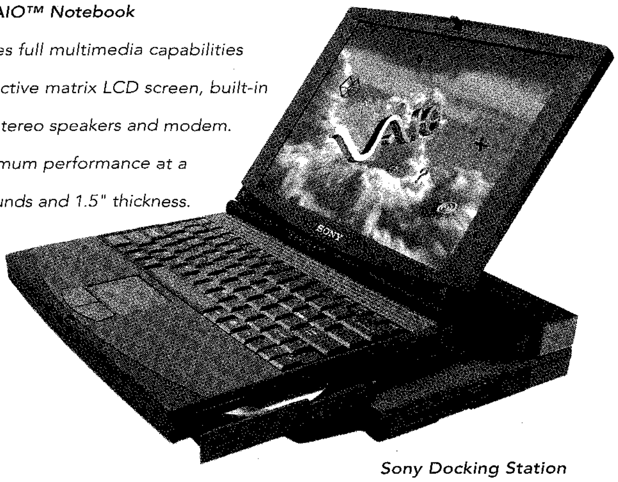

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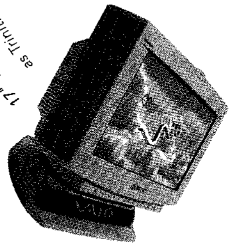

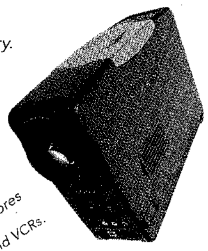

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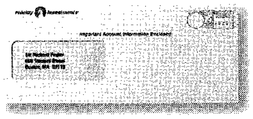

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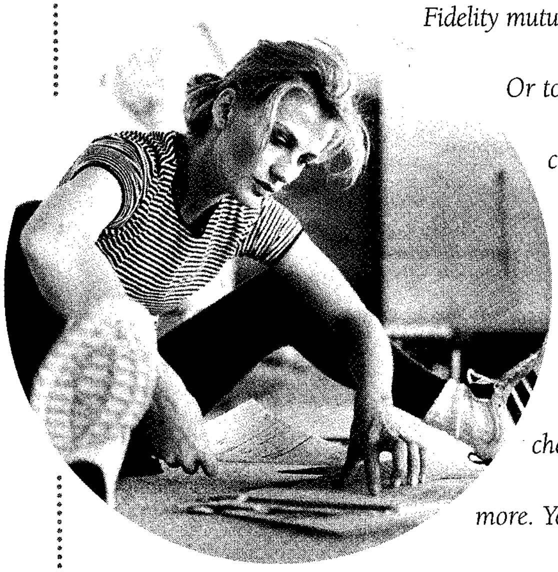

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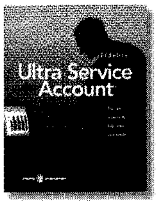

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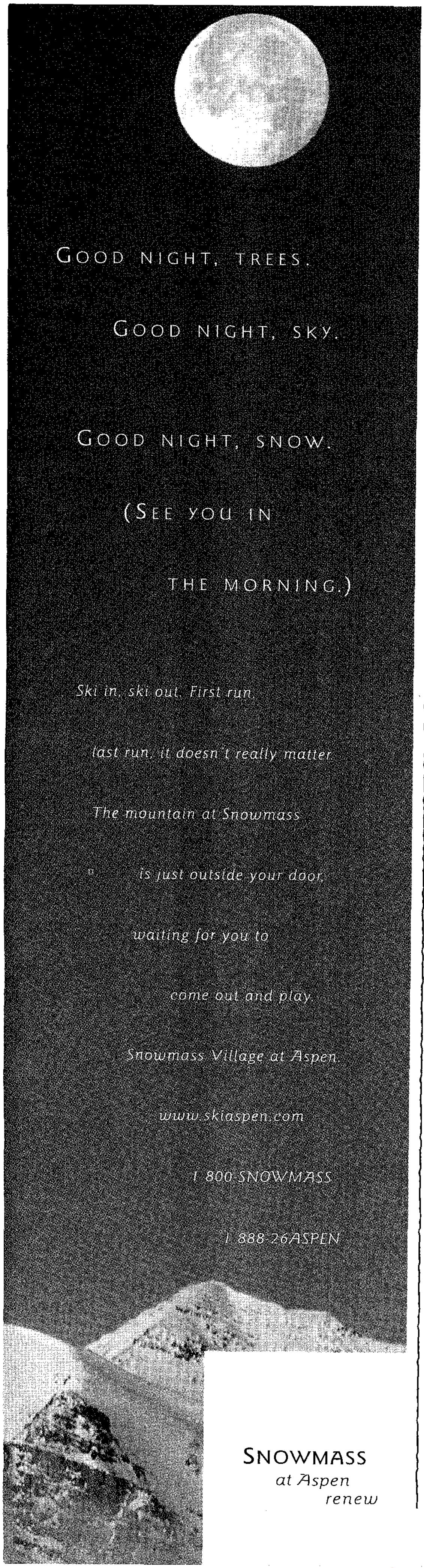

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NOVEMBER 10, 1997

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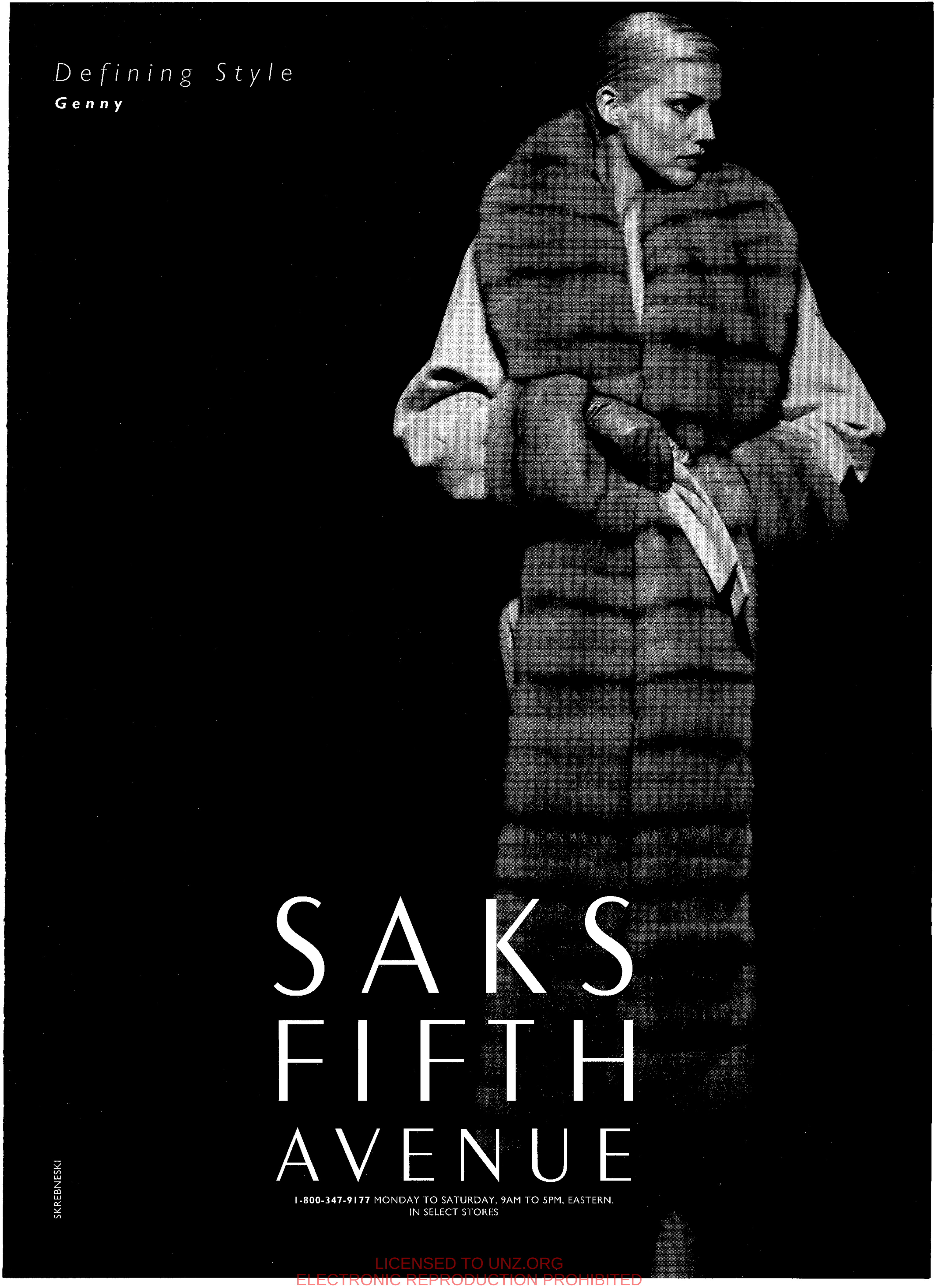
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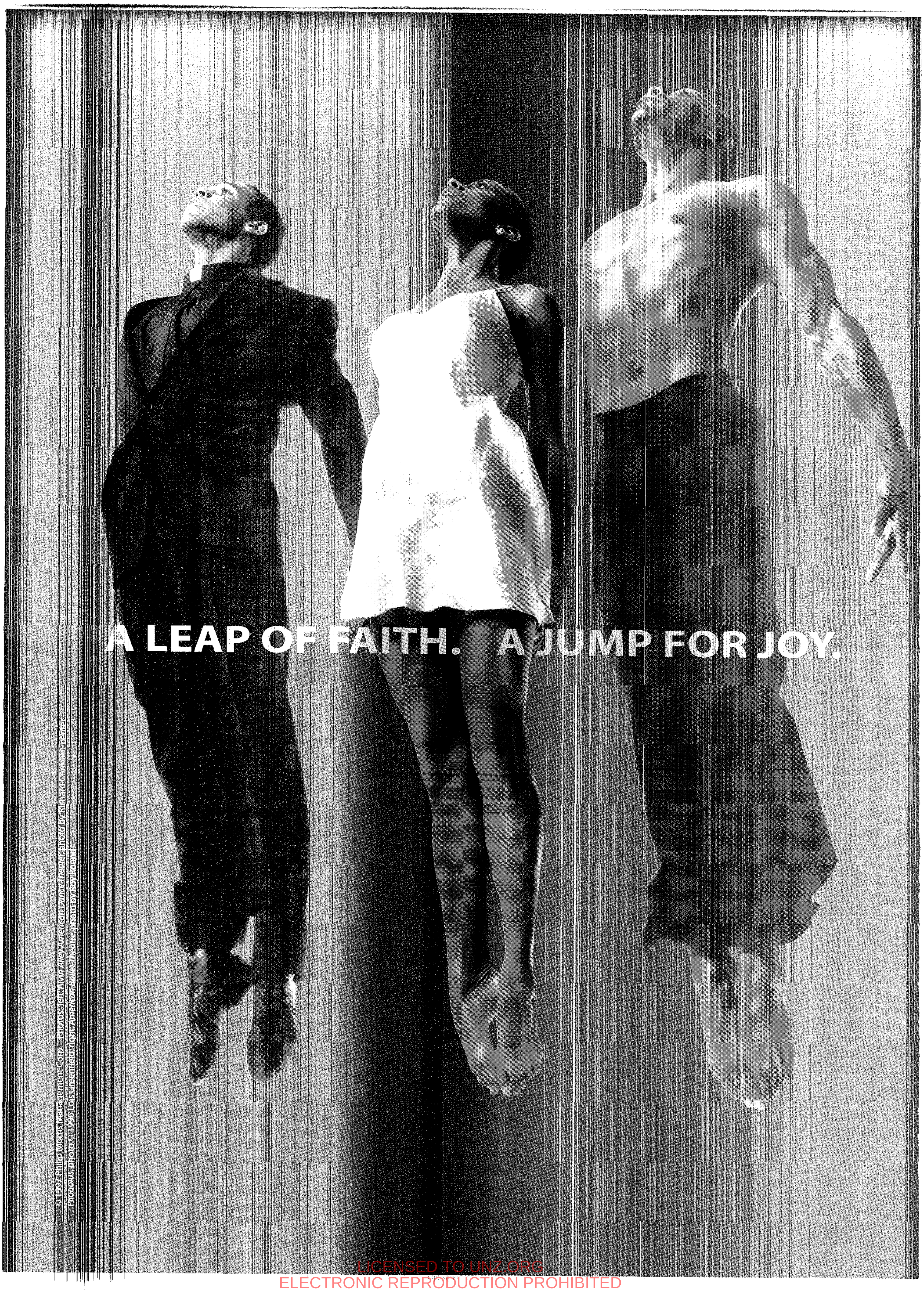
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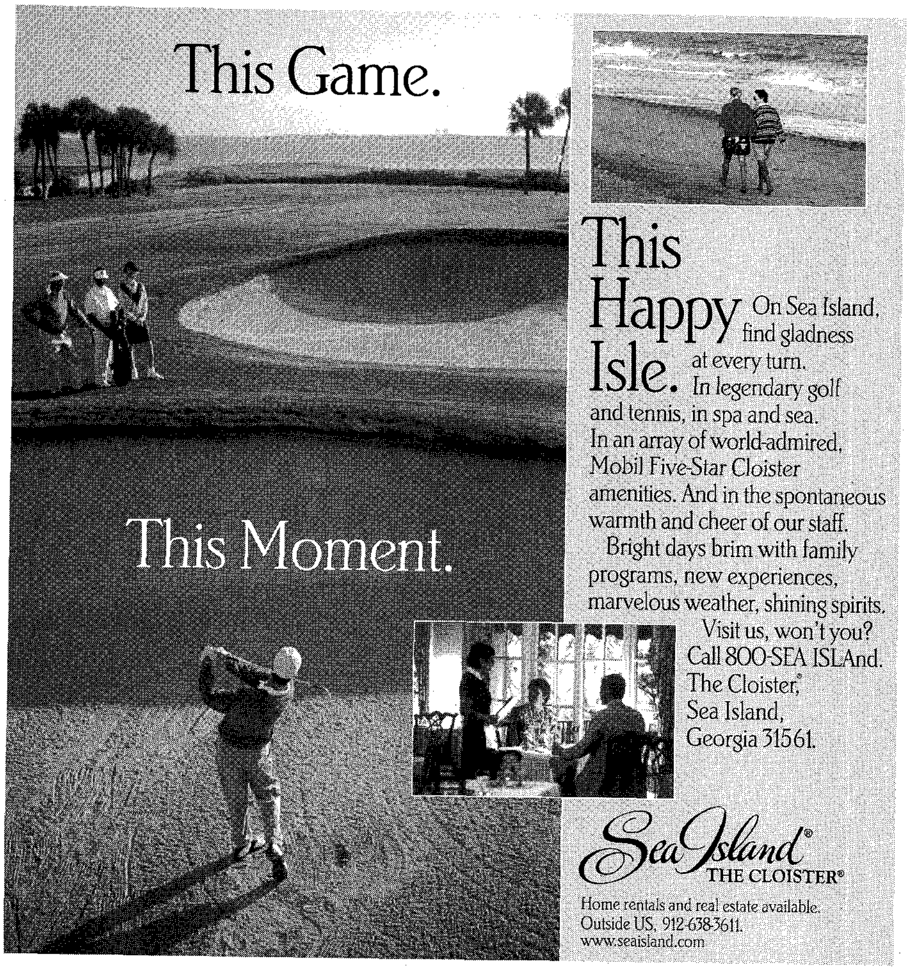

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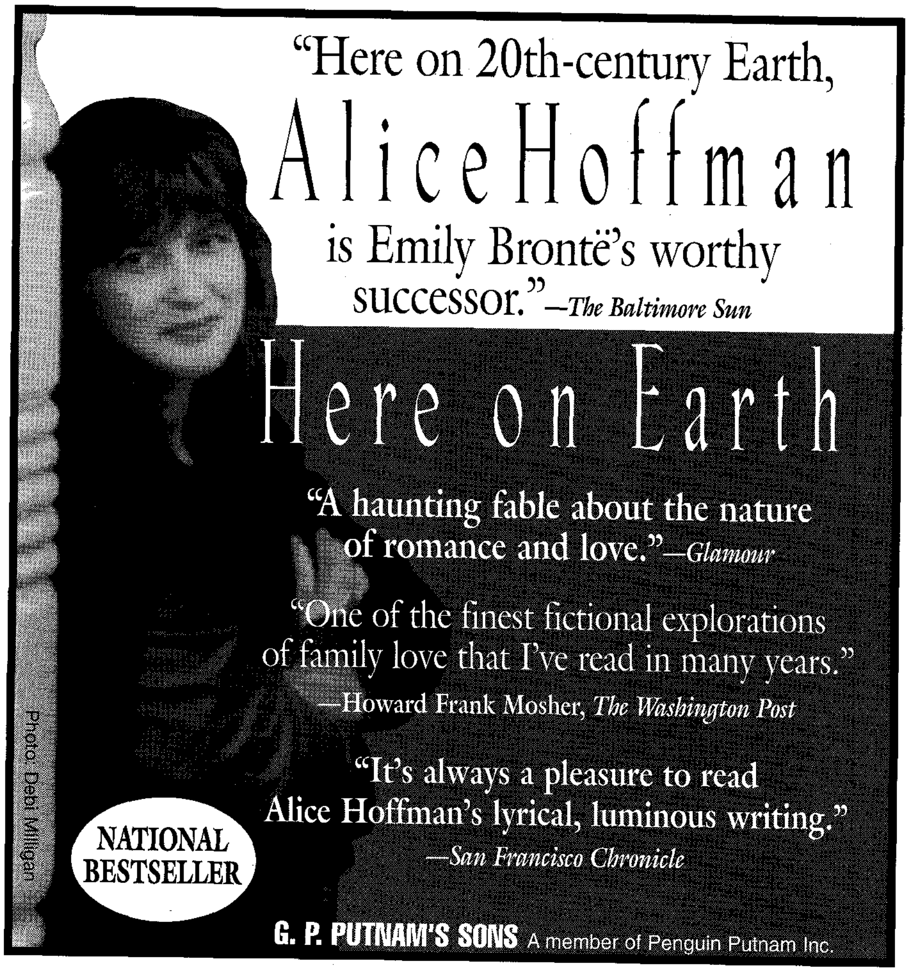

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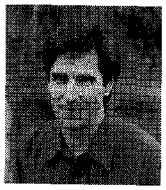
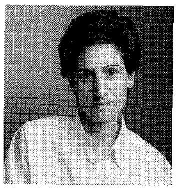


**MICHAEL IGNATIEFF** ("Digging Up the Dead," p. 84) is a writer and historian based in London. He is the author of six books, including "Russian Album," a family memoir, which won the Heinemann Prize of Britain's Royal Society of Literature. Among his television and film scripts are "Blood and Belonging" and the forthcoming "Eugene Onegin."

**MARK LEVINE** ("Primo Uomo," p. 94) is a professor of creative writing at the University of Montana and a correspondent for *Outside*. He is the author of "Debt," a book of poems.

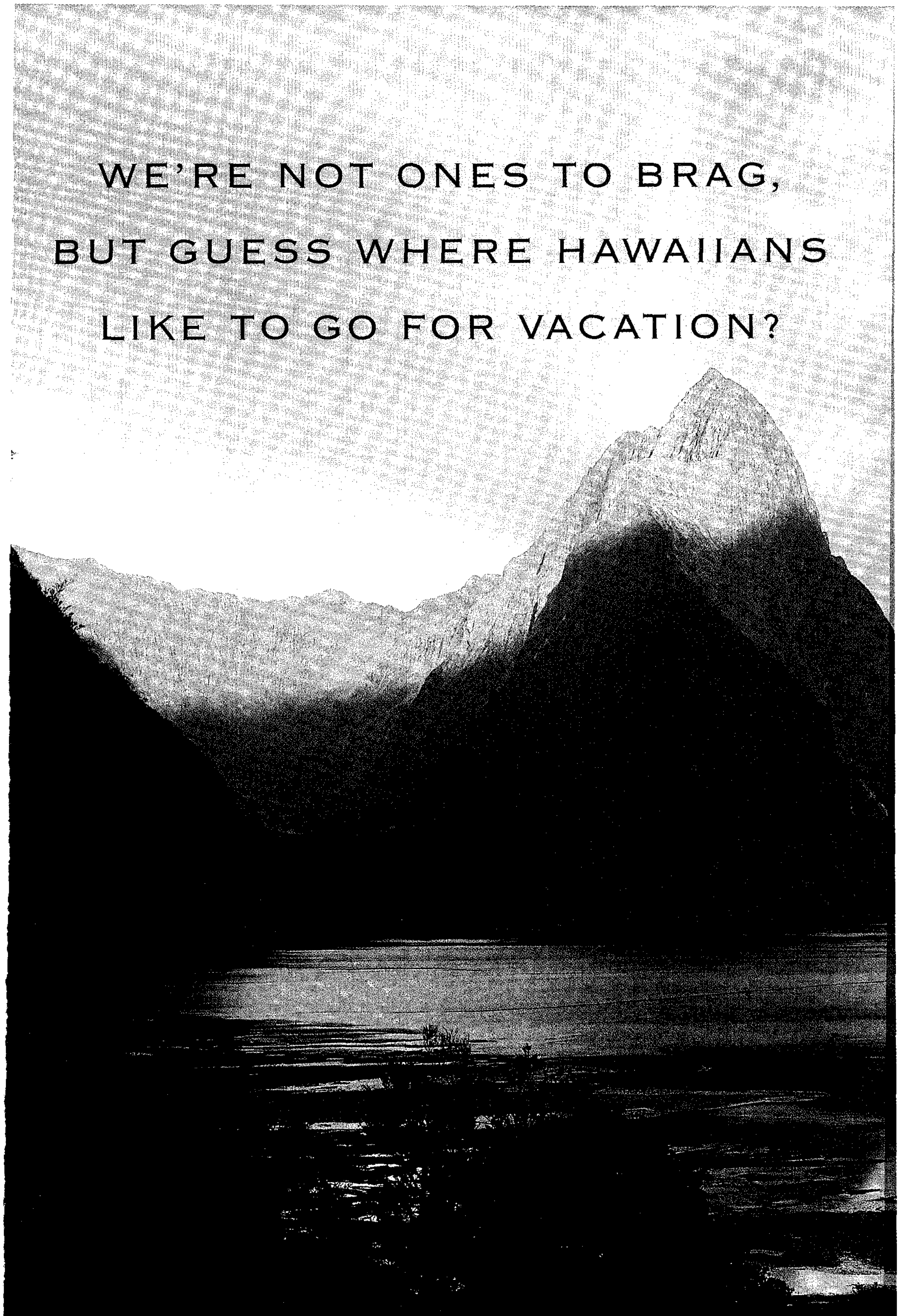
**GORE VIDAL** (Books, p. 112) has written more than twenty novels—his first, "Williwaw," was published in 1946—including a series of historical novels: "Burr," "1876," "Lincoln," "Empire," "Hollywood," and "Washington, D.C." His collection "United States: Essays 1952-1992" won the National Book Award.

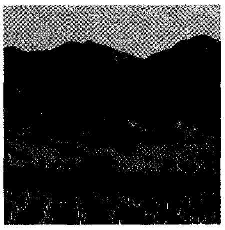
**SIMON SCHAMA** ("Tunnel Vision," p. 98) has been an art critic for *The New Yorker* since 1995. A University Professor of art history and history at Columbia, he is the author of seven books, including "Citizens" and "Landscape and Memory." In 1996, his work was awarded a National Magazine Award for Essays and Criticism.



**STACY SCHIFF** ("The Runaway Mother," p. 78) is the author of "Saint-Exupéry" and is currently at work on a biography of Véra Nabokov, for which she was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship.

**MICHAEL ROBERTS** (A Spring Preview, p. 88) is this magazine's director of fashion visuals, and since 1994 he has contributed more than twenty covers and illustrations. He lives in Paris. ◆

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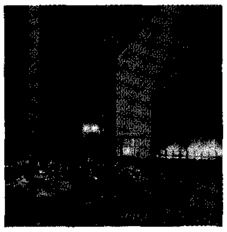
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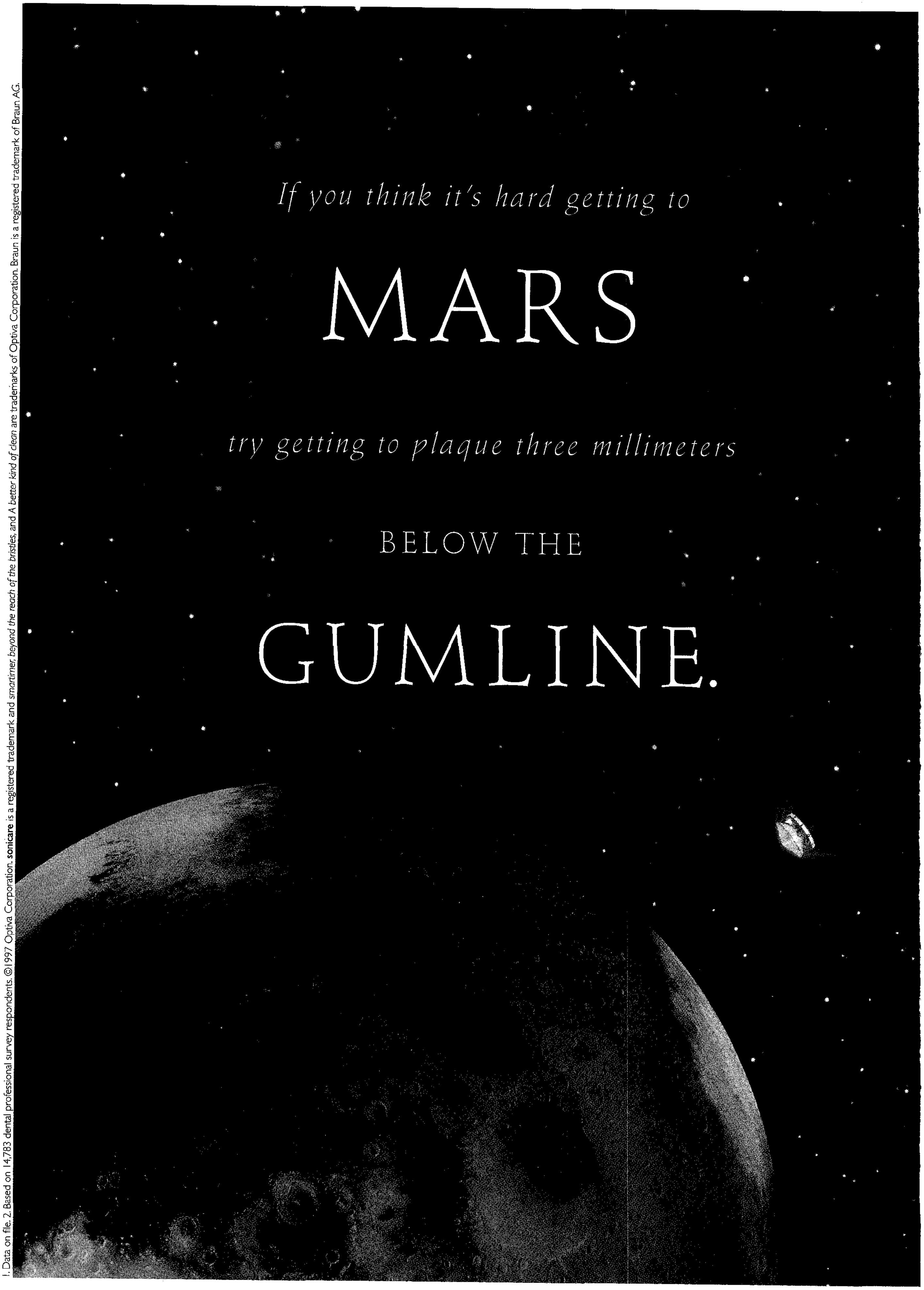
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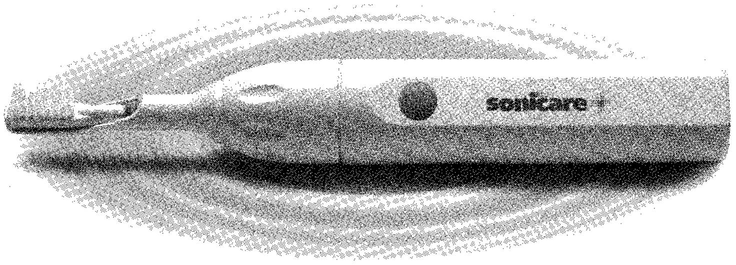

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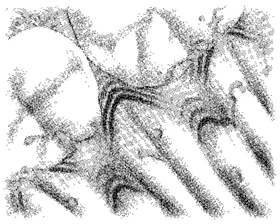

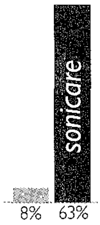

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# COMMENT

## NOWHERE MAN

*Why China's leader is seen as some kind of hero.*

A CHINESE friend, now thirty-five, recalls that when he was living in Shanghai, in 1988, Jiang Zemin, an engineer and Party functionary of no known distinction, made the transition from mayor of Shanghai to the city's Party Secretary. Around the same time, a major train derailment caused disruption in the city, and there was a hepatitis epidemic. Shanghai residents, playing on their new leader's name, observed that "Jiang means river, ze means to flood, min means the people, and that's us." The omens did not look auspicious.

Believing themselves modern and sophisticated, Shanghai dwellers found Jiang roundheaded and slow, ungainly, a man without clear goals, who rarely confronted issues directly. He seemed the quintessential *jiangbei* man—a man from "north of the river" (the Yangtze), which was an area that for more than a century had provided the booming, corrupt city with low-paid service personnel, cheap factory labor, and easy marks for Shanghai's tough, entrenched gangs.

To many in Shanghai in the nineteen-eighties, Jiang was a shadow figure—a man without a past, without policies, without qualities. He seemed to be affiliated with no known power groups; it was merely said that his rise had been eased by a fellow-engineer, a successful Party entrepreneur who was a friend of the family. Nor did Jiang have any known revolutionary credentials, though he was old enough to have been an activist in the civil war, which ended in 1949. True, he had studied in the Soviet Union for a while and had worked for a bit in a factory; he also had shards of American history down pat. Students at Shanghai's Jiaotong University who had demonstrated during the early months of 1987, when the democracy movement was then being suppressed, recall Mayor Jiang's visiting their campus, reciting bits of the Gettysburg Address, and telling them he "knew about democracy" and understood their quest. In 1989, as the Shanghai Party boss, he still managed not to offend the wrong people even while Beijing was circling wildly out of control.

It is mostly images of this negative kind that the American press emphasized in its coverage of President Jiang Zemin's recent state visit, and the negativity was reinforced by criticism, from President Clinton and members of Congress, of Jiang's stubbornness over human-rights issues and his government's trade practices. However, Chinese from the mainland in their twenties or their fifties perceive Jiang from a different angle. Members of these age groups either are too young to have had any personal

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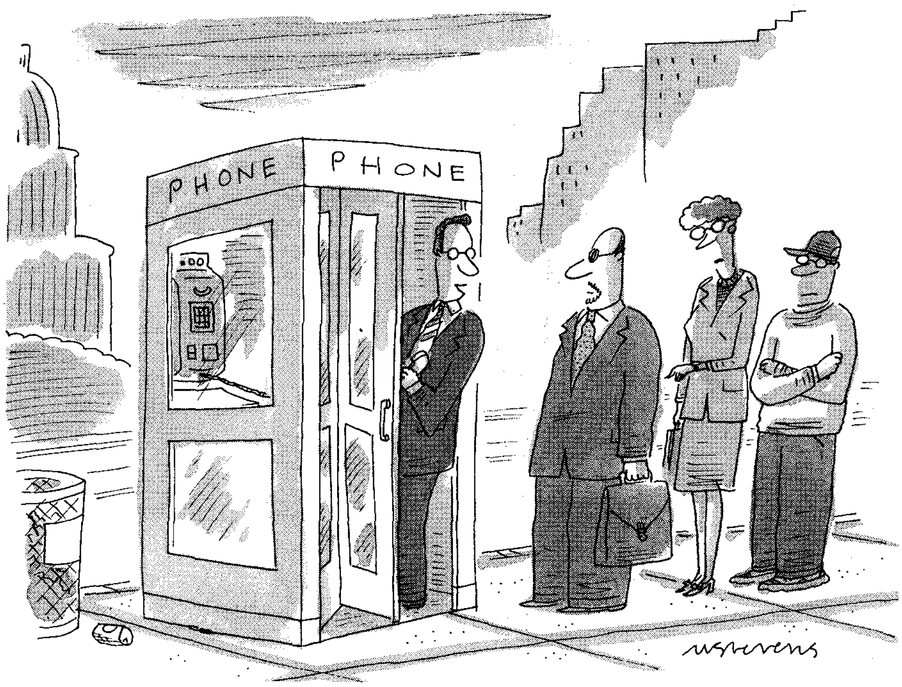


*"I may be awhile. I'm soliciting funds for my reëlection campaign."*

• •

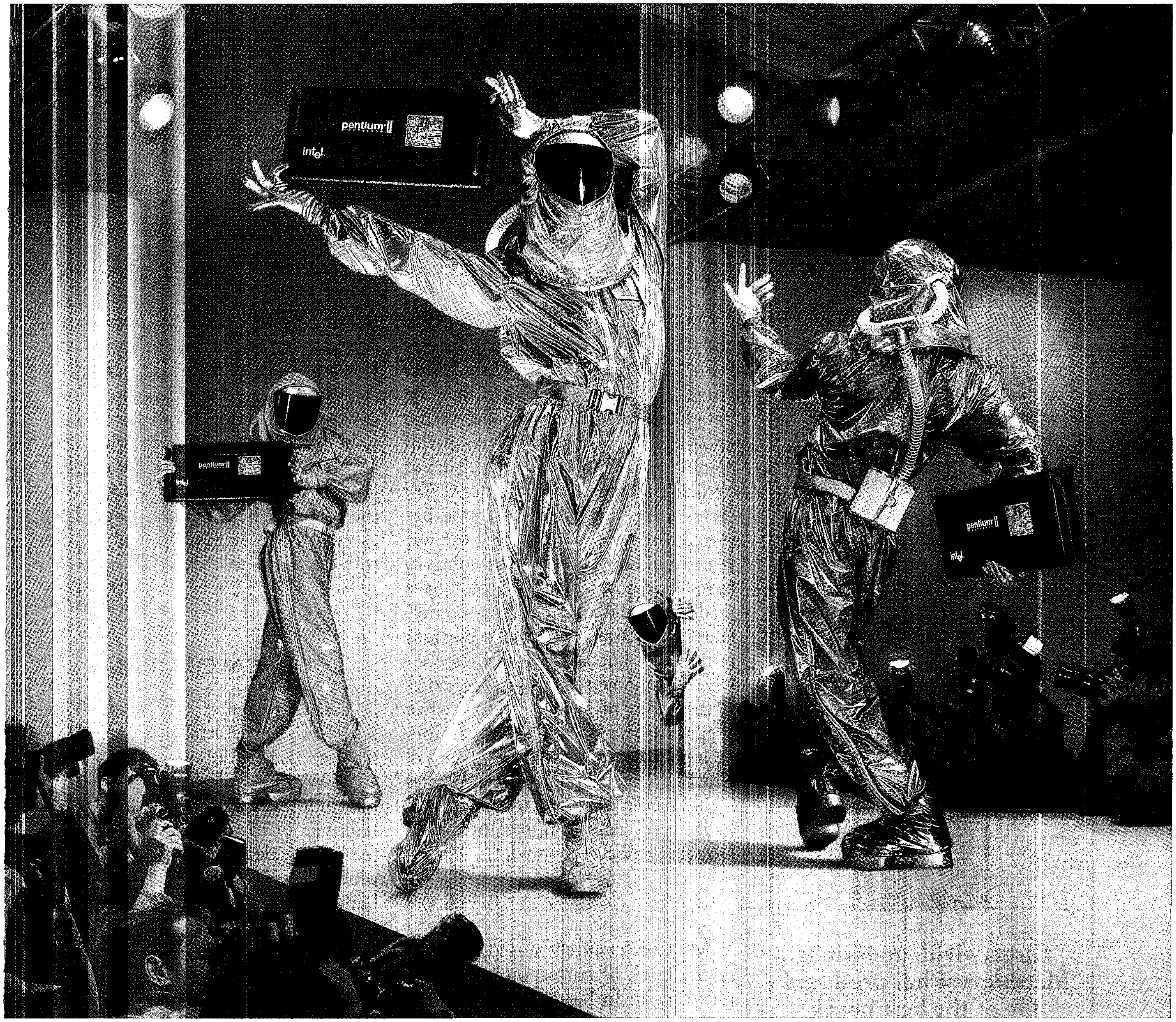
experience of the heady Tiananmen days or are old enough to have lived through the years of terror and chaos in the Cultural Revolution of the sixties and early seventies. To these Chinese, Jiang is not a trimmer or a buffoon; rather, he is just right—right for them, and right for his country. "Now we can work again," two older scholars said recently. "We can concentrate without endless political disruptions, we have freedom to come and go as we choose and to pretty much say what we think without fear." While Jiang may not be much to listen to or to look at, one of the scholars said, "he can find compromise amid dissension, he can handle the Old Guard and the young ambitious bureaucrats." A favorite book among members of this generation is one that describes in detail how Western journalists have been "demonizing China."

The enthusiasm and the lyricism with which many twenty-somethings talk about their leader is astonishing. They take the vague hints about his proletarian experiences as gospel, and they see his knowledge of Russian and his flashes of English and Romanian as marks of a truly "fashionable man"—one who, in their phrase, "is in vogue." To them, Jiang is a man of the world, and his forays on the piano or his bursts into song make him a "star." Besides, he seems to have some real affections and other emotions. They trust him to change China slowly, without chaos. So what if Jiang is a performer or tries to pretend to have charisma? It's far better than not trying, they feel. Like their elders, they find Western press reports and accounts of China biased and outdated—"the perpetuation of a view from the seventies."

It may well be that it was because Jiang really was a man without a past that Deng Xiaoping chose him for the highest posts; certainly no one who had been implicated in the turmoil of the spring of 1989 would do, for the wounds were too deep. As one Chinese poet, a friend, put it, "Jiang is a new kind of emperor, a strategist of power. Jiang has no stance. He is unpredictable." Now, however, one can see how Jiang managed to build the power base that he had so conspicuously lacked. The most important moment surely came in the spring of 1995, when he launched corruption charges against Chen Xitong, the Party boss of Beijing, and ousted him.

The Chinese from the mainland find Jiang a hero, if of an odd kind, and they are neither impressed nor moved by American attempts to persuade them otherwise. Despite their different ages and outlooks, he is to them just the man for this particular season.

—JONATHAN SPENCE AND ANNPING CHIN



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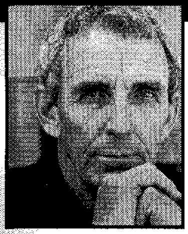

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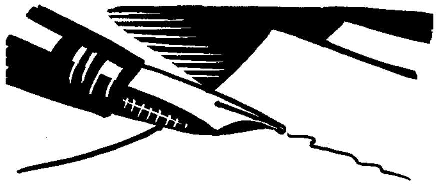

## LEGACY OF A YOUNG GIRL

As someone who knew Anne Frank and her family in Amsterdam, I agree with Cynthia Ozick ("Who Owns Anne Frank?," October 6th) that the pat statement of Anne's belief in the goodness of people was taken out of context to give the theatrical version of her diary an upbeat ending. But Ozick seems unable to grasp that, just as being consistently upbeat during the war years would have been self-deluding, to have lived in constant fear would have made survival impossible. And she reiterates that Otto Frank elided portions of the diary, but, as I have written elsewhere, Anne herself rewrote her notes in the spring of 1944, and Otto, when preparing the book for publication, included material she had discarded. The definitive edition that Ozick cites includes even more passages that Anne had elided. Anne Frank's intentions have not yet been honored.

LAUREEN NUSSBAUM
Portland, Ore.

Ms. Ozick entirely missed the point of my book of correspondence with Otto Frank. In her evisceration of all those who have not, in her opinion, appreciated Anne Frank's brilliance or her excruciating loss, she writes all of us—including Otto Frank—off as shallow. I can only say that I never compared myself to Anne; I only identified with her feelings. My book is simply about a child reaching out to the wisdom and kindness of a universal father figure, who proved that even a Holocaust survivor who had lost his entire family could help others with their own pain. It doesn't matter how anyone represents Anne Frank. If she has become a symbol of hope and love to children around the world, then she didn't die in vain.

CARA WEISS WILSON
Pacific Grove, Calif.

Ms. Ozick's conclusion that Anne Frank's diary should have been burned brought to mind my own wartime experience of hiding in a house not far from Anne's Secret Annex. I, too, was Jewish-born, and I, too, kept a diary. Mine, however, I burned shortly after the war's end in an irrational—and futile—attempt to rid myself of very painful memories. Fifty years later, I wonder what Anne would have done with her diary if she had returned from the camps. Might she have reconsidered what she wrote? I am sure she would have. (I was never in a camp, but some time spent in a Gestapo prison gave me an inkling.) But that should only enhance the value of what she left us: it was her singular fate to have given us a picture of what I would call the medium hell of hiding out. Let us mourn her, be grateful, and get on with our lives.

ABRAHAM PAIS
New York City

## A MISCALCULATION

Kurt Andersen's "Son of Est" (The Talk of the Town, October 20th & 27th) reported that in 1991 the I.R.S. "came after" Werner Erhard and that Erhard went into exile that same year. As the chairman of the board of directors of the Landmark Education Corporation, which delivers the Landmark Forum, I am writing to advise you that, as was reported in the September 12, 1996, Los Angeles *Daily News*, the I.R.S. paid Erhard two hundred thousand dollars to settle a lawsuit he filed against the agency for disclosing false tax information about him in 1991. The I.R.S. paid Erhard this almost unheard-of amount after it became unequivocally clear that statements made to the media by I.R.S. spokesmen about Erhard's supposed tax liabilities were false. Erhard did not leave the country because he was being pursued by the I.R.S.; he never failed to pay lawfully due taxes, was not delinquent in his taxes, and was never sued by the I.R.S. for failing to pay taxes.

ART SCHREIBER
San Francisco, Calif.

*Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.*

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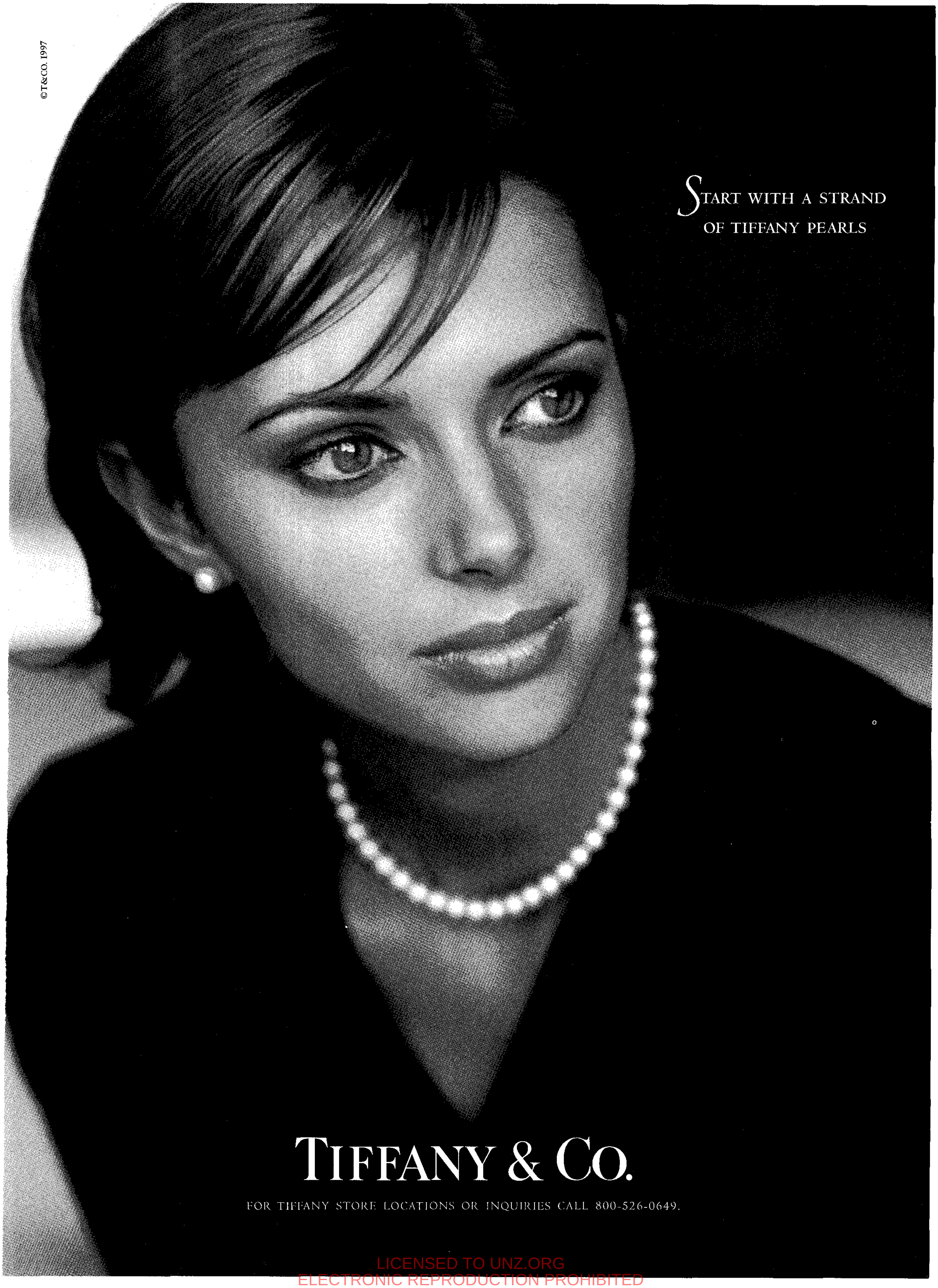
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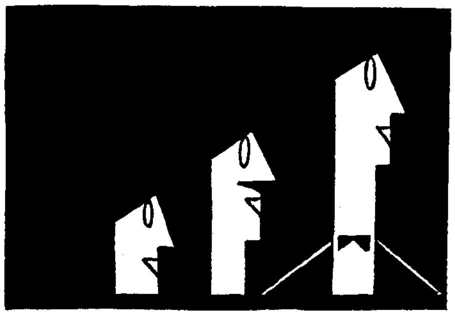

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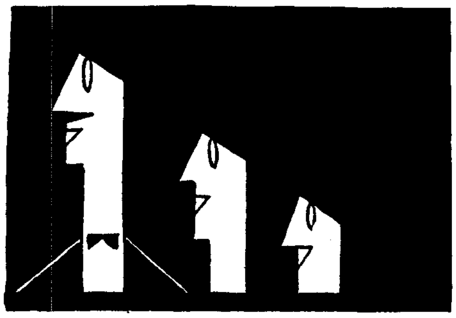


## THE THEATRE

### OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)*

**The Adjustment**—The Jewish Repertory Theatre presents a romantic comedy by Michael Folie. In previews through the Nov. 9 matinée. Opens that night at 7. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

**The Ballad of Yachiyo**—Philip Kan Gotanda's drama, about a triangle involving a male artist, a young girl, and an older woman, is set in Hawaii in 1919. In previews through Nov. 9. Opens Nov. 11 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

**The Batting Cage**—Two sisters (Veanne Cox and Babo Harrison) check in at a Holiday Inn with the ashes of a third, in this comedy by Joan Ackermann. Lisa Peterson is the director. In previews. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

**Brutality of Fact**—Keith Reddin's dark comedy, about a family of dysfunctional women, kicks off the season at Primary Stages. Opens Nov. 5 at 8. (354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

**Cyrano de Bergerac**—Frank Langella directs, and dons the schnozz, in his own adaptation of Rostand's romantic drama, from a translation by Brian Hooker. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

**Dark Cowgirls and Prairie Queens**—From the Carpetbag Theatre, a celebration of seven black heroines of the Wild West. Written and directed by Linda Parris-Bailey. Opens Nov. 7 at 7 and continues through Nov. 16. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

**A Dybbuk; or, Between Two Worlds**—Tony Kushner's adaptation of the Yiddish folk tale stars Ron Leibman and is directed by Brian Kulick. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

**Filumena**—Maria Tucci co-stars with Tony Amendola in her own adaptation of Eduardo DeFilippo's 1946 romantic comedy. A Blue Light Theatre Company production, directed by James Naughton. Two previews on Nov. 5. Opens Nov. 6 at 8. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

**Into the Woods**—The original Broadway cast of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's 1987 musical (including Bernadette Peters, Joanna Gleason, Chip Zien, and Tom Aldredge) reunites for two benefit concert performances. Nov. 9 at 3 and 7:30. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

**Ivanov**—Kevin Kline stars in David Hare's adaptation of Chekhov's 1887 drama, in a staging directed by Gerald Gutierrez. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**Jackie**—Margaret Colin portrays Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and a supporting cast of eight depicts a hundred additional figures, in Gip Hoppe's comedy, which satirizes public perceptions of events in the title character's life. In previews through Nov. 9. Opens Nov. 10 at 6:45. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**The Lion King**—A cast of forty-six takes the stage in Disney's Broadway version of the animated film, directed by Julie Taymor. Choreographed by Garth Fagan. With music and lyrics by Elton John and Tim Rice. In previews. (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

**Long Day's Journey Into Night**—A National Asian American Theatre Company revival of O'Neill's domestic tragedy. Previews through Nov. 8. Opens Nov. 9 at 2. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 505-3003.)

**A Madhouse in Goa**—Judith Ivey leads the cast in a drama of intrigue by Martin Sherman ("Bent"), which takes place over two decades on two Greek islands. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3392.)

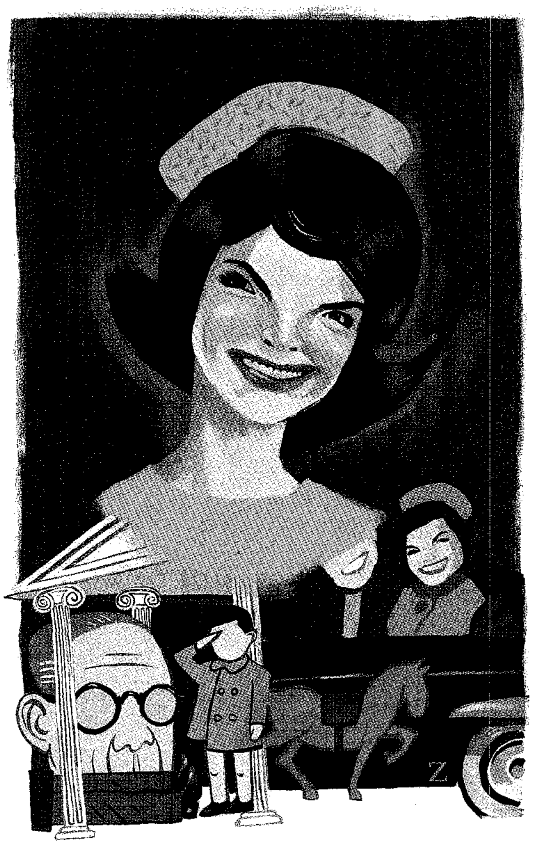
**A Man Called Macbeth**—In the Japanese troupe Daisan Erotica's yakuza adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy, Macbeth is a mob boss and Duncan does karaoke. Nov. 6-8 at 8. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015.)

**Mojo**—The rock-and-roll scene in London in 1958 is the setting for the British playwright Jez Butterworth's comedy. Neil Pepe is the director. In previews through Nov. 9. Opens Nov. 10 at 8. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242.)

**Pride's Crossing**—A ninety-year-old woman who once swam the English Channel (Cherry Jones) relives the stages of her life, in Tina Howe's new play, directed by Jack O'Brien. Previews begin Nov. 6. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**Proposals**—In Neil Simon's new comedy, directed by Joe Mantello, a family reunites at its vacation home in the Poconos. Two previews on Nov. 5. Opens Nov. 6 at 6:30. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**The Scarlet Pimpernel**—A musical version of the 1905 Baroness Orczy novel. With music by Frank Wildhorn and a book and lyrics by Nan Knighton. Peter Hunt is the director. In previews through Nov. 8. Opens Nov. 9 at 6:30. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)



*Margaret Colin, in "Jackie."*

ZOHAR LAZAR

**Street Corner Symphony**—A revue of music and dance from the sixties and seventies, directed by Marion J. Caffey. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

**Three Days of Rain**—After the death of a famous architect, his son and daughter uncover a mysterious legacy, in a drama by Richard Greenberg. In previews through Nov. 9. Opens Nov. 11 at 6:45. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

### OPENED RECENTLY

**Alligator Tales**—Anne Galjour, the author of and sole performer in this ambitious play about a group of eight folks in South Louisiana, is a talented storyteller. She shows real compassion for such characters as Rosetta Cheramie (who periodically hoses off her Virgin Mary statue in the front yard), and she makes some good points about the reality of life in the often romanticized Cajun country (the landscape of "Evangeline" has long since given way to oil wells and polluted water). Unfortunately, the procession of natural disasters—lightning, floods, hurricanes—which provides the work's narrative glue eventually grows tiresome. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

**Always . . . Patsy Cline**—Not quite a revue, not quite a play, this spirited and Nashville-slick celebration of the late, great country singer is, rather, a streamlined song-delivery device. Tori Lynn Palazola doesn't sound exactly like Patsy, but she's good at doing Patsy. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

**The American Clock**—"Every society has a clock ticking on it," says one of the characters in Arthur Miller's 1980 play, a small-scale epic that looks back both in sorrow and in anger at the devastation of the Depression. Like Dennis Potter's "Pennies from Heaven," the play uses popular songs to underscore the distance between the characters' dreams and their chances of fulfilling them, but it goes even further, questioning the very system that created millions of "internal refugees." James Houghton's direction is psychologically astute (if perhaps a little too slowly paced) and sensitive to the complexities of Miller's view of America, and he has deftly handled the cast of fifteen actors, who are called upon to play fifty roles and who give uniformly strong, affecting performances. "The American Clock" closed on Broadway after only twelve performances; its return is something to be thankful for. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529. Closes Nov. 16.)

**As Bees in Honey Drown**—In Douglas Carter Beane's comic indictment of America's obsession with fame, J. Smith-Cameron is hilarious as a cultural arbiter whose fabricated personality is, as an adoring Saks salesman puts it, "a mixture of every woman I've ever loved in a movie." The script's satirical power sours only when, every once in a while, it takes itself too seriously. Mark Brokaw directed. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

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**The Cherry Orchard**—The Sovremennik Theatre Company's production of Chekhov's play. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes Nov. 9.)

**Defying Gravity**—Jane Anderson has based her new drama on the disastrous launching, in 1986, of the space shuttle Challenger. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

**Duet! A Romantic Fable**—The Adobe Theatre Company's amiable spoof of all things fifties, from lounge acts to monster movies to overwrought dream sequences, includes a very funny twist on the kiss-a-frog-meet-a-prince fairy tale. The cast is charming, the design is just right, and the direction, by Gregory Jackson, Erin Quinn Purcell, and Jeremy Dobrish, is not overwhelming—a big step in the right direction for Adobe. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 560-7387. Closes Nov. 8.)

**Fly**—A comedy about black American manhood, written by Joseph Edward, who is also in the cast. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

**The Forest**—The Pearl Theatre Company presents Aleksandr Ostrovsky's 1871 tragicomedy. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Nov. 30.)

**Forever Tango**—This stepchild of Vegas and Buenos Aires gets everything right, from the basic ingredients (sex, pomade) to the big emotions (e.g., the weltschmerz of the bandonion players). Created and directed by Luis Bravo. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

**Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde**—Writer-director Moisés Kaufman renders the playwright's trials from edited transcripts, interposing passages from letters, Wilde's writings, and other people's memoirs and commentaries. The result, thanks to Kaufman's clever (if occasionally self-indulgent) direction and a strong, versatile cast, is powerful and surprisingly theatrical. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

*Luis Bravo's "Forever Tango," at the Walter Kerr.*

MAX VADUKUL

**The Last Session**—A reworked version of a musical by Steve Schalchlin (music and lyrics) and Jim Brochu (book), about an AIDS-afflicted songwriter's final studio work. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

**Mad Shadows**—An adaptation by Kristin Marting of the Canadian writer Marie-Claire Blais's 1960 novel, in which a jealous girl disfigures her handsome brother. Ms. Marting is also the director. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes Nov. 8.)

**Missionaries**—Elizabeth Swados's latest work, a requiem for three nuns and a laywoman murdered in El Salvador in 1980. Nov. 5-8 at 7:30. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

**Queen Amarantha**—In his new play, Charles Busch portrays a queen who won't be compromised by her sex: she's more interested in bettering life for her subjects than in consorting with "the decaying circle of fops and gossips" that surrounds her. While the work is more serious than the usual fare from the author of "Psycho Beach Party," it does feature a deliciously over-the-top performance by Ruth Williamson, as a childhood companion turned backstabbing rival of the queen. The topnotch cast also includes Carl Andress, Marcus Lovett, Karen Phillips, John Sloman, and John Wojda. Busch and Andress directed. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Nov. 16.)

**Sam and Itkeh**—The American Jewish Theatre begins its twenty-fifth season with a drama by Jack LaZebnick, about a retired couple whose fifty-year relationship is disrupted when a secret from the past surfaces. (307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

**1776**—Scott Ellis's lean, lively production of Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone's still fresh 1969 musical about the drafting of the Declaration of Independence is possibly the most entertaining and the wittiest history lesson you've ever received. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/8/97.) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Nov. 16.)

**Side Show**—A new musical based on the story of Violet and Daisy Hilton, Siamese twins who grew up in the world of carnivals and became a vaudeville act in the thirties. (They died in 1969, at the age of sixty, poor and forgotten.) Its most salient feature is its lack of ambition: a promising premise is flattened by bombastic shlock rock, generically inspirational lyrics, an unimaginative set, and a book that reduces the sisters' entire existence to a pulp-romance plot. (Henry Krieger wrote the music; Bill Russell wrote the book and lyrics.) Vulgarity can be a way of getting deeper into a subject; here, it's a way of getting nowhere. Nevertheless, most of the actors manage to carry themselves through this maze of confused intentions and slack direction (by Robert Longbottom) with dignity, especially Emily Skinner and Alice Ripley, who play the twins, two people joined at the hip but just as unalike as they are similar. (11/3/97) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

**Tell-Tale**—Theatre Couture's comic thriller puts a drag spin on Edgar Allan Poe. Sherry Vine and Jackie Beat are the stars. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

**Thérèse Raquin**—The Classic Stage Company opens its thirtieth season with Neal Bell's adaptation of Zola's 1867 novel, starring Elizabeth Marvel in the title role. David Esbjornson is the director. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Nov. 23.)

**Triumph of Love**—This musical adaptation of the 1732 Marivaux farce is a garden of theatrical delights, a triumph of intelligence, feeling, musicality, and wit. The theme is the foolish lengths we go to—the disguises we put on—in order to obtain love or to protect ourselves from it, and James Magruder's rich, bawdy book is perfectly in tune, jumping swiftly and smoothly between the manic and the melancholy. Jeffrey Stock, who wrote the music, makes a remarkable Broadway début, and Susan Birkenhead's lyrics are even more remarkable: incisive, funny, and poignant, they call to mind the songs of Rodgers and Hart and of Comden and Green. Under the well-paced direction of Michael Mayer, the cast of seven is superb; the characters are more or less stock types, but the actors, led by Betty Buckley and F. Murray Abraham, as a self-deluded sister and brother, bring them to full ripeness. The others are Nancy Opel, Kevin Chamberlin, and Roger Bart (in plump second-banana parts), Christopher Sieber (as a tall, blond, handsome prince), and Susan Egan (as a perky princess, equal parts Puck and Peter Pan). (11/3/97) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**Two Pianos, Four Hands**—Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt perform both classical and pop selections while recounting their years of musical training, in a comedy they co-wrote. Directed by Gloria Muzio. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

**The Water Children**—Wendy MacLeod's drama about reproductive rights, staged by Women's Project & Productions and Playwrights Horizons. (416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 16.)

## LONG RUNS

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **MERE MORTALS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

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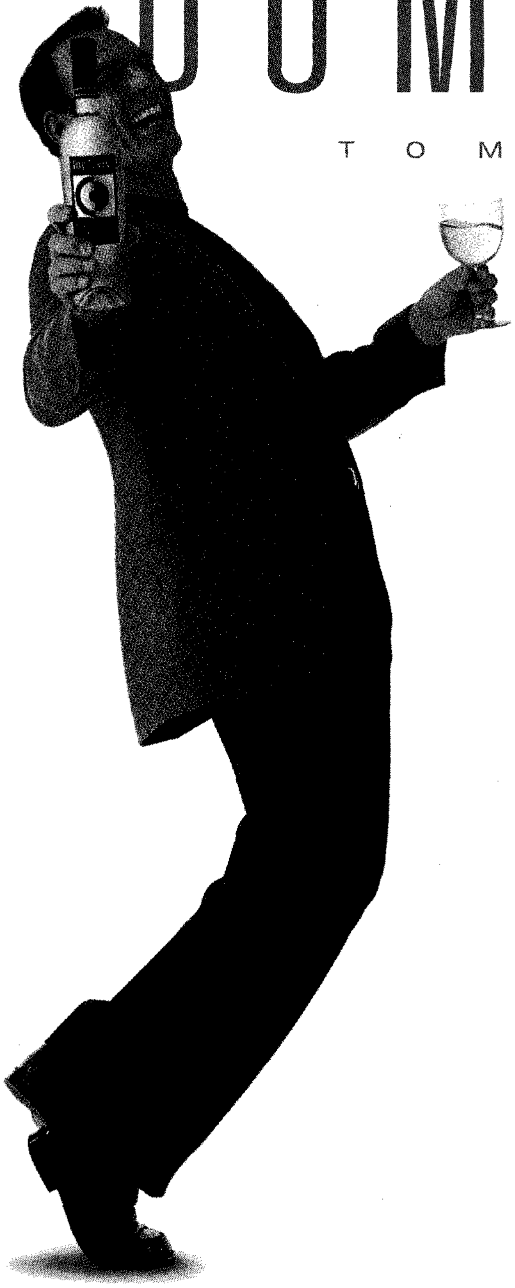

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# DANCE

**American Ballet Theatre**—For its inaugural fall New York season, the company presents a festival of commissioned works. Nov. 4 at 7: An opening gala. . . . ¶ Nov. 5 at 8: "The Elements," "Some Assembly Required," "Valses Poeticos," and "Cruel World." . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 8: "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," the première of "Involo" (choreographed by Jean-Christophe Maillot), "Valses Poeticos," and "Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1." . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 8: "Theme and Variations," "The Leaves Are Fading," and "Fancy Free." . . . ¶ Nov. 8 at 2: "Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1," "The Elements," and "Fancy Free." . . . ¶ Nov. 8 at 8: "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," "The Leaves Are Fading," and "Theme and Variations." . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 2: "The Elements," "Valses Poeticos," "Involo," and "Fancy Free." . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 8: "The Elements," "Some Assembly Required," "Involo," and "Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1." . . . ¶ Nov. 11 at 8: "Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1," "The Elements," and "Cruel World." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Nov. 16.)

*33 Fainting Spells, at D.T.W.*

**Siobhan Davies Dance Company**—For its American début, the gifted British company presents "The Art of Touch" and "Bank," to harpsichord music and relentless percussion, respectively. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 4-7 at 8, Nov. 8 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 9 at 2.)

**33 Fainting Spells**—The Seattle-based team of Dayna Hanson and Gaelen Hanson (no relation, but you couldn't guess that from watching) bring their telepathically intimate duet "The Uninvited" to Dance Theatre Workshop for its East Coast début. The hour-long work tells its simple story wordlessly: Gaelen shows up, to the surprise of Dayna; they build trust; Gaelen leaves. Within this framework they manage to fit an impressive range of choreographic invention: a ladder dance, some heavy-booted vaudeville, a motif involving a glass and a leak in the ceiling, a push-me-pull-you two-step on a tabletop, a segment of close-range choreography that seems to take place strictly on their faces. Dayna Hanson traces the inspiration for the work to a trip to Mexico, where she saw a girl walking around with a Baggie leaking water. "It's fascinating," she says, with characteristic curiosity, "that you can dance with something like water." (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Nov. 6-8 at 8.)

**Wendy Houstoun**—In her three-part solo "Haunted, Daunted, and Flaunted," the London-based choreographer and dancer brings out the lyricism and black humor in paranoia, as when, for example, she holds one limb after another at gunpoint and forces them to dance. She accompanies her steps with alternately funny and wrenching monologues that elucidate her languid, swooping movement. ("Sometimes I try saying hello," she says, "thinking that I'll stave off a possible murder attack.") (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Nov. 6-8 at 8:30.)

**Global Exchange/Danza Libre**—The third installment of Danspace Project's international series features works by Gerardo Espinosa, of Mexico ("Miquiztli: La Muerte Tiene Permiso"); Sara Gebran, of Venezuela ("Bites: Los Diablos Aprenden a Nadar"); and New Yorker Kathy Westwater ("Under the Skin of the Glass"). (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 7-9 at 8:30.)

**Martha at Mother**—Richard Move, in the guise of Martha Graham, provides dance-history lectures in a night-club setting with the help of a small ensemble. This month's lecture includes appearances by Jane Comfort and Company, Tere O'Connor, Ellis Wood, Jaime Martinez, and Dancenoise. (Mother, 875 Washington St., at 14th St. 366-5680. Nov. 5 at 8 and 10.)

**"Fables"**—The Pascal Rioult Dance Theatre, the resident troupe of the French Institute-Alliance Française, retells the fables of Jean de La Fontaine, with music by Bach, de Falla, Rossini, and other suitably fabulous composers. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Nov. 6-8 at 8.)

# NIGHT LIFE

## CONCERTS

**"Jazz, Blues, Klezmer, and Other Delights"**—With all the makings of a very classy variety show, this eclectic evening features the blues of singer Carrie Smith; the elegant chamber jazz of pianist Roger Kellaway, guitarist Gene Bertoncini, and bassist Michael Moore; and the ethnic merriment of the Harold Seletsky Klezmorim Quintet. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Nov. 6 at 8.)

**Ben Folds Five**—A smart, piano-based trio from Chapel Hill, led by Folds, who plays a wondrously jaunty baby grand and sings like a cross between Joe Jackson and Freddie Mercury. With the Brit pop of Travis and the guitar-and-cello stylings of Verbow. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. Nov. 6 at 8.)

**Counting Crows**—At the end of their "Recovering the Satellites" tour. With Dog's Eye View. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Nov. 6 at 8:30.)

**Ben Allison and Medicine Wheel**—Allison, a fine composer and an exceptional bassist, leads an ensemble of talented, if underappreciated, players (including tenor saxophonist Ted Nash and pianist Frank Kimbrough) performing his own compositions as well as those of Herbie Nichols, Andrew Hill, and Ornette Coleman. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9491. Nov. 7 at 5:30.)

**Mulgrew Miller, Richie Goods, and Steve Nelson**—A repertoire of choice Ellington and Strayhorn should calm the rushing currents of pianist Miller and vibist Nelson. Goods holds down the bass spot. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-2200. Nov. 7 at 7.)

**Toninho Horta**—The Brazilian singer and guitarist. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. Nov. 7 at 8.)

**"Rumi: This Is Love"**—The poetry of the thirteenth-century Persian mystic, in a musical program featuring "performance poet" Shahram Shiva and pianist and composer Michael Harrison. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. For information about tickets, call 219-2527. Nov. 7-8 at 8.)

**New York Autumn Blues Festival**—The festival opens with a two-evening program called "Mississippi Blues from the Hills to the Delta." Nov. 7 at 8: Othar Turner and the Rising Star Fife and Drum Band, Jerry Ricks and Lonnie Pitchford, and the Willie Foster Blues Band. Nov. 8 at 8: Othar Turner and his band, "Little" Dave Thompson, and Lonnie Pitchford. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Continues through Nov. 15.)

**Engelbert Humperdinck**—The bedroom balladeer celebrates his thirtieth year in the love trade. (Westbury Music Fair. 516-334-0800. Nov. 7-8 at 8 and Nov. 9 at 7.)

**Robert Trentham**—The vocalist performs "In Thinking of America," a program of songs and stories from the Civil War. (New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. 873-3400. Nov. 8 at 2.)

**Liliane Montevecchi and Jean-Pierre Cassel**—Singing popular songs in both French and English. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 8 at 7 and 9:30.)

**"Bryter Layter: The Music of Nick Drake"**—A sterling lineup turns out to celebrate the English folk artist, who died in 1974 at the age of twenty-six. Among the performers are Peter Holsapple, Richard Barone, Duncan Sheik, Peter Blegvad, Susan Cowsill, Katell Keineg, Terre Roche, and Syd Straw. (St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn. Nov. 8 at 8.)

**John Kelly**—The performance artist pulls out songs from the sixties and seventies by, among others, Brian Wilson, Blind Faith, and Tom Waits. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Nov. 9 at 7.)

**"Fascinating Rhythms"**—A benefit concert as populist in its lineup as the enduring songs themselves. The performers include Wynton Marsalis, Joe Henderson (who will re-create his recent "Porgy and Bess" recording with an all-star band featuring Tommy Flanagan, John Scofield, Dave Holland, and Chaka Khan), and Liza Minnelli. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 10 at 7:30.)

**Joe Jackson**—Is he really going out like this? On his latest effort, "Heaven & Hell," the former punk Gershwin dabbles with highfalutin classical arrangements and capricious guest appearances; what he forgets to do is write a single memorable song. (Supper Club. Nov. 10-12 at 8.)

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

*(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)*

**Algonquin Hotel**, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**MARY CLEERE HARAN** is currently at work in the Oak Room in "Pennies from Heaven," a show of movie songs from the thirties. Dining.

**Birdland**, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Drummer **T. S. MONK** (through Nov. 9) holds passionately to the commandment "Honor thy father." His sturdy repertory ensemble devotes the week to a reëxamination of Thelonious Monk's ever-durable tunes. Vocalist Nnenna Freelon sits in for the whole engagement, and bassist Ron Carter, pianist Geri Allen, and others will make guest appearances. Nov. 10-11: The **MAKOTO OZONE** trio. Dining.

**Blue Note**, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Nov. 9: The **BOB JAMES** group. Dining.

**Carlyle Hotel**, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The sparkling **BOBBY SHORT** presides in the Café Carlyle through Dec. 31. On Mondays, **WOODY ALLEN** plays with the **EDDY DAVIS NEW ORLEANS JAZZ BAND**. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** has settled in for a stay that will take her through New Year's.

**Citron 47**, at 401 W. 47th St. (397-4747)—A comfy living-room bistro in Hell's Kitchen. The **CHUCK WILSON** trio is out to show that Monday nights aren't just for big bands. Swing saxophonist Wilson's chamber-jazz threesome includes guitarist **HOWARD ALDEN**, a master of pre-bop idioms, and bassist **MURRAY WALL**. Dining.

**Iridium**, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 9: **THE JAZZ MESSENGERS: THE LEGACY OF ART BLAKEY**. For close to half a century, the drum-

GERARD DUBOIS

mer Art Blakey used his band, the Jazz Messengers, to whip young talent into shape and then send it out into the world. While the taskmaster received a steady recharge from this influx, his acolytes picked up training that has seen more than a few of them through long careers. The current sextet brings two legendary vets, saxophonist Benny Golson and trombonist Curtis Fuller, together with the younger pianist Geoff Keezer, trumpeter Terence Blanchard, and bassist Peter Washington. The superb drummer Lewis Nash attempts to fill the master's shoes. Starting Nov. 11: The **CYRUS CHESTNUT** trio. Mondays belong to electric-guitar pioneer **LES PAUL**. Dining.

**IZZY BAR,** 166 First Ave., at 10th St. (228-0444)—On Nov. 9, **ANTHONY WILSON,** the impressive young West Coast composer-arranger and guitarist (and son of the legendary arranger Gerald Wilson), brings in a well-stocked ensemble, featuring keyboardist Larry Goldings, tenorist Bennie Wallace, trombonist Art Baron, and saxophonists Joe Temperley and Jerry Dodgion.

**JAZZ STANDARD,** 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—A new jazz establishment features some new jazz hopefuls. **STEFON HARRIS** (through Nov. 6), who has already garnered praise from Wynton Marsalis and Joe Henderson, is the vibraphonist de jour. Tenor saxophonist **MARK SHIM** (Nov. 7-9) has attracted attention recently with his sharp playing, and, like Harris, he's got a Blue Note recording contract.

**KNITTING FACTORY,** 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—You can't play with as many heavyweights as drummer **BILLY HART** (in on Nov. 5) has and not learn a thing or two about leading a well-crafted band. Besides, Hart's own dashing percussion work is worth the price of admission. Nov. 6: **TONES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY,** featuring **GRAHAM HAYNES.** This young trumpeter has something fresh on his mind. Sidestepping the "Everything old is new again" routine of his peers, Haynes keeps the mix eclectic: world music, funk, free-form; and he folds it all into his lean and pungent horn lines. And, yes, he's drummer Roy's son. Nov. 7: **WAYNE HORVITZ,** a scrupulous keyboard eclectic who traffics only in surprises, débuts his new band, Zony Mash, then he and Zony Mash jam with downtown supermen **JOHN ZORN** and **MARC RIBOT.** On Nov. 8, Zorn, Ribot, and keyboardist **JOHN MEDESKI** make some noise, and, on Nov. 10, Ribot plays with his band **LOS CUBANOS POSTISOS.**

**RAINBOW & STARS,** 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. Australian singer **DAVID CAMPBELL** is in through Nov. 15.

**SMALLS,** 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—Altoist **MYRON WALDEN** brings in his trio on Nov. 6. Stocked to the gills with exciting players, the **JASON LINDNER BIG BAND** holds court every Monday.

**SWEET BASIL,** 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Nov. 9: The **LOUIS HAYES** quintet. Hayes doesn't get the press that his peers routinely enjoy, but he remains one of the greatest hard-bop drummers. With his experience as the rhythmic muscle behind Cannonball Adderley and Oscar Peterson, he knows how to keep a band solid and swinging. Starting Nov. 11: The **LEON PARKER** duo and quartet. Dining.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD,** 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club. **WINARD HARPER** (in through Nov. 9) was the drum-playing sibling in the Harper Brothers, one of the first neo-traditional jazz bands to gain attention. He brings along the on-the-verge-of-breakthrough tenorist Don Braden, two solid standard-bearers—pianist George Cables and bassist Buster Williams—and, on trumpet, newcomer Patrick Rickman. From Nov. 11: The **ERIC REED** trio. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

**VISIONES,** 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Nov. 5-8: A familiar name from the seventies, pianist **ONAJE ALLAN GUMBS** hasn't lost his knack for spirited improvising and solid bandleading.

## ROCK, ETC.

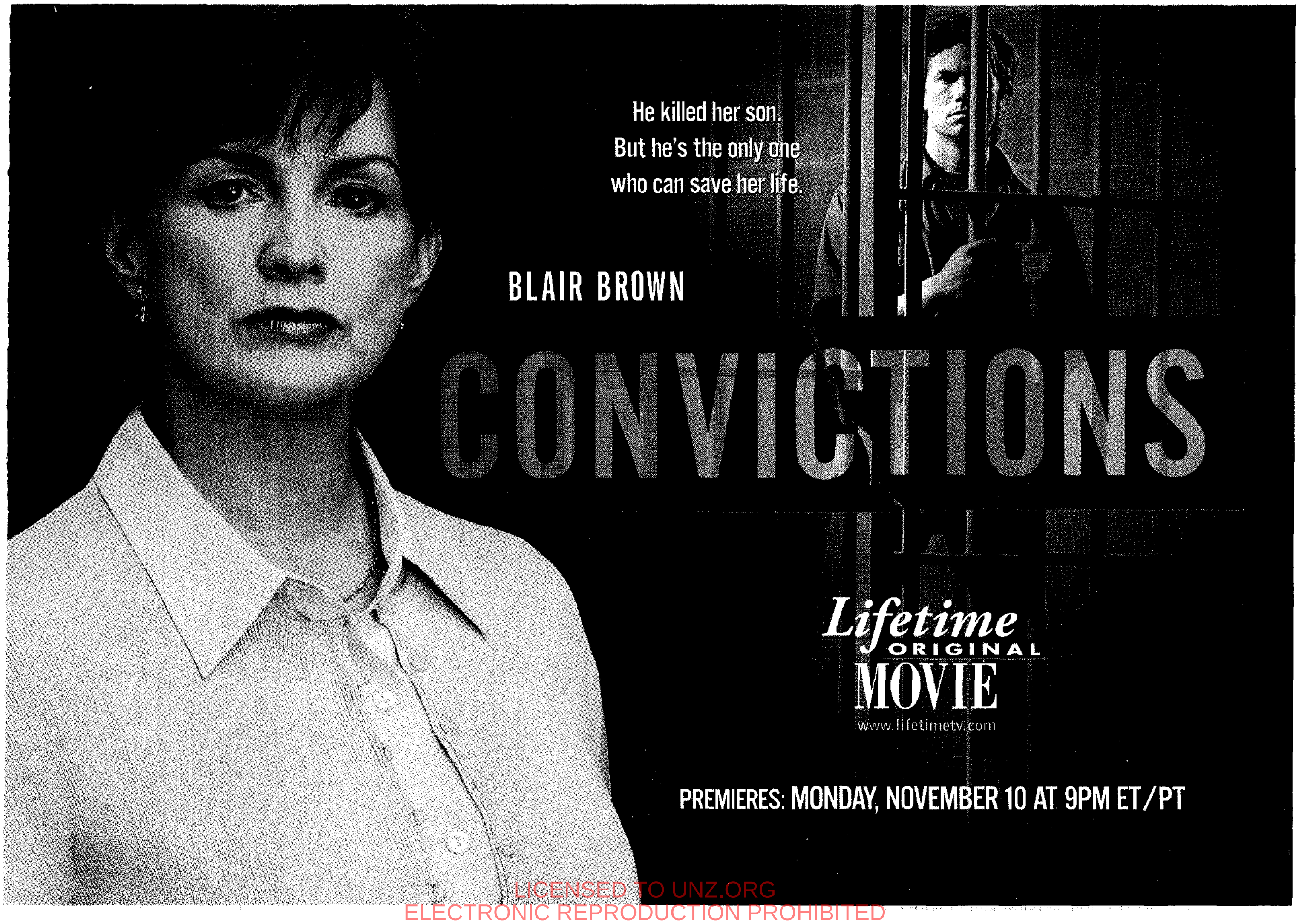
**ARLENE GROCERY,** 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—A narrow, dimly lit renovated bodega that's the perfect generic environment for three to five unknown bands each night trying to escape obscurity. Top-notch folk busker **MARY LOU LORD** motors in from Boston on Nov. 10.

**BOTTOM LINE,** 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—**MAURA O'CONNELL** is in on Nov. 7. Truly interpretive singers are a scarce commodity outside country and pop; this former lead singer of the Celtic group De Danaan is as good as she is rare. Nov. 8-9: The excellent Iowa songwriter **GREG BROWN.** With **PATTY LARKIN,** a warm-voiced singer-songwriter who has spent the last twelve years making imaginative, poetic music. Nov. 11: **RICK DANKO AND ERIC ANDERSEN,** an intermittent, open-ended collaboration that joins The Band's fidgety-voiced bassist with a singer-songwriter who, long before Springsteen, Costello, and Forbert, was saddled with the "next Dylan" tag.

**BROWNIES,** 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Nov. 5: The country, folk, and rock sounds of the **HEALTH & HAPPINESS SHOW.**

**CBGB & OMFUG,** 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—A narrow, graffiti-strewn cave packed every evening with new and used bands. . . . ¶ Next door, the neat and comfortable testament to gentrification called CB's Gallery plays host on Nov. 7 to the jazz-funk combo **MIDNIGHT VOICES,** featuring **VIJAY IYER.**

**CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S.,** 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Raunchy lounge singer **ANDRE WILLIAMS** whoops it up Nov. 7-8.



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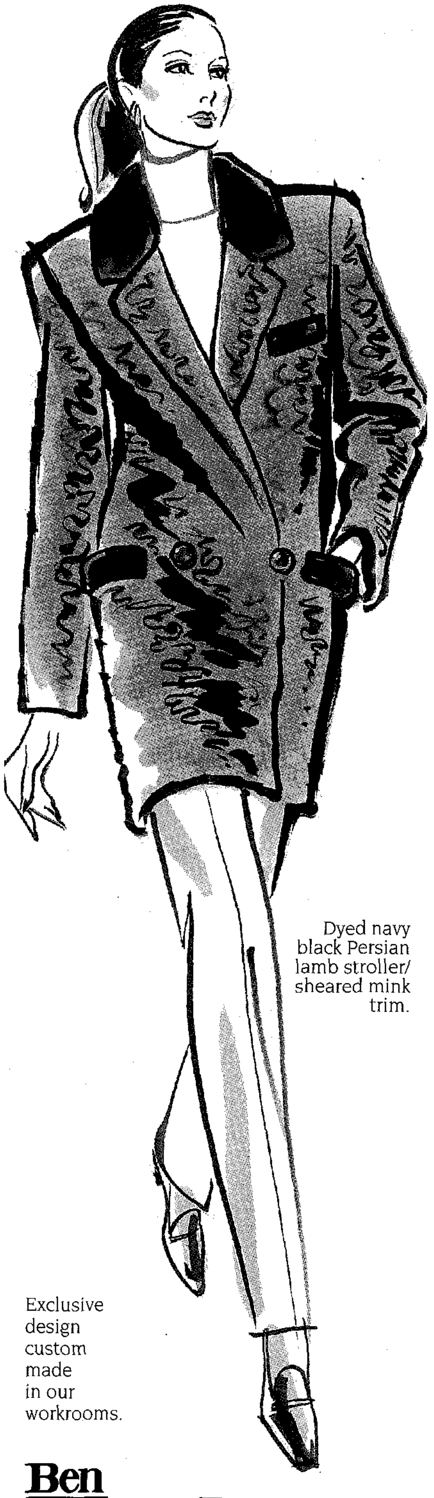
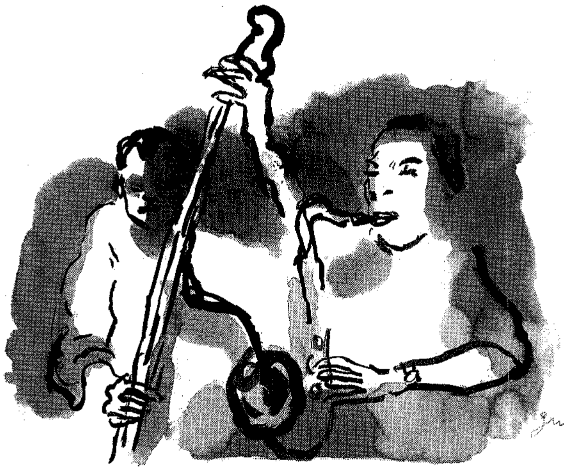


**Fez,** 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Nov. 5: **MARY LOU LORD** (see Arlene Grocery). The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

**Irving Plaza,** 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Nov. 5-6: The **VERVE.** Yet another in a series of strange English obsessions (Marmite, lemon curd, Rowan Atkinson), this stately combo, led by vocalist "Mad" Richard Ashcroft (a recent cover boy for *The Face*), has long made mannered pop that falls somewhere between the orchestral elegance of Radiohead and the public-house muscle of Oasis. Nov. 7: **JOHN HIATT'S** new band, the **NASHVILLE QUEENS,** melts the cheese of most country tunes with the twin Hiatt trademarks, intelligence and wit. Nov. 8: Irish rock with the **SAW DOCTORS.** Nov. 10: **TONIC.** Nov. 11: On its second album, "So Much for the Afterglow," **EVERCLEAR** happily thumbs its nose at the infamous sophomore jinx. Art Alexakis, who has been woefully underrated as a songwriter (anyone doubting his gifts should listen to "Father of Mine," a hysterically bittersweet tale of paternal disinterest), leads a trio that performs his snickering, cyanide-laced garage rock with expert precision. With **LETTERS TO CLEO.**



GERARD NICOLAS

**Mercury Lounge,** 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—**THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS** return on Nov. 6 with some brand-new ditties. On Nov. 7, two Golden Palominos alumni, singer **SYD STRAW** and veteran narrative-spinner **PETER BLEGVAD,** share a bill (see also "Bryter Layter," in Concerts). Nov. 8: Dylan-via-Costello troubadour **JOHN WESLEY HARDING** and critically acclaimed but commercially ignored singer-songwriter **AMY RIGBY.** Nov. 11: The **HIGH LLAMAS.** Drawing (along with new bands such as Belle & Sebastian) on the idiosyncratic work of Harry Nilsson and Brian Wilson, among other daydreaming pop confectioners, the Llamas are one of the most original and easy-to-enjoy acts around.

**S.O.B.'s,** 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—At this club dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova, the first week of each month has been given over to international dance music. **HIGHLY RAI** (Nov. 5) features beats from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. **BASEMENT BHANGRA** (Nov. 6) is an evening full of Indian grooves by way of London. One of reggae's prime poets, **MUTABARUKA** (Nov. 11) fuses political issues with witty, slightly mad homilies rendered over engaging arrangements. Dining.

**Tramps,** 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—On Nov. 6, J. Mascis and **DINOSAUR, JR.** get back on the trail. Nov. 8: Reggae pioneer **DESMOND DEKKER** ("The Israelites"), with his band, the Aces. Nov. 10: **SMASH MOUTH** makes hyperactive rock with a bit of everything—ska, punk, surf, metal—thrown in. Nov. 11: Speedcore with **PRONG** and industrial rock with **SISTER MACHINE GUN.**

**Wetlands,** 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Nov. 5: Modern folkie **PATTI ROTHBERG.** Nov. 8: Master African drummer **BABA OLATUNJI** brings his inspired twelve-piece ensemble in for the evening. In the lounge, subway favorite **MECCA BODEGA** puts in a rare above-ground appearance.

# ART

## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**Metropolitan Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"The Private Collection of Edgar Degas." Degas (1834-1917) amassed one of the finest collections of paintings, drawings, and prints of his day. (At one point he even considered forming his own museum.) It was dominated by the work of Ingres and Delacroix, the heroes of the artist's youth, but was also strong in Manet, Cassatt, Cézanne, Gauguin, and, of course, Degas. The show is valuable not only for the extraordinary quality of the art but also for the insight it provides into Degas's aesthetic temperament. Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "Picasso: The Engraver." Through Dec. 21. . . . ¶ "Jackson Pollock: Early Sketchbooks and Drawings." Through Feb. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**Museum of Modern Art,** 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection, Vienna." More than a hundred and fifty oils, gouaches, watercolors, and sketches by the master draftsman, who, despite an early death at twenty-eight from the Spanish flu, made defining contributions to Expressionist and erotic art. Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "On the Edge: Contemporary Art from the Werner and Elaine Dannheisser Collection." Through Jan. 20. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

**Guggenheim Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective" offers more than four hundred pieces from nearly half a century of work. At both Guggenheim venues, through Jan. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

**Guggenheim Museum SoHo,** 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—The museum's Rauschenberg retrospective continues here; the Ace Gallery (275 Hudson St.; 255-5599) has opened a third front in the exhibition and, until its portion of the show closes on Nov. 9, adheres to the schedule of the museum's downtown branch (see also Galleries—Downtown). (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

**Whitney Museum of American Art,** Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The Richard Diebenkorn retrospective presents examples from every phase of the California master's career, including early sketches and figure studies, fifties-era abstractions, landscapes from the sixties, the "Ocean Park" series, and the late collages. Through Jan. 11. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

**American Museum of Natural History,** Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"The Nature of Diamonds" looks at many facets of the adamantine stone, from its birth in volcanic fissures that later harden into diamond pipes (re-created here in a simulated mine tunnel) to its eventual rise to the heads of state (e.g., on the crown of Peter the Great, displayed in the exhibition's walk-in diamond vault). Through April 26. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**Brooklyn Museum of Art,** Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Monet did more travelling than the other Impressionists, and he went to some mighty pretty places: "Monet and the Mediterranean" unites paintings of the Riviera, painted in the eighteen-eighties, with those of Venice, from a trip in 1908. This exquisite exhibition therefore shows the artist both on the brink of discovering the "serial procedure" that would become his signature and after having mastered it. The gardens and seascapes of Antibes radiate a

# TASTE OF NEW YORK

## The VISA Preferred Guide to Dining

By Ralph DiGennaro

*As fall begins in earnest and autumnal winds whip through the canyons of New York, from Wall Street to the Upper West Side, it is comforting to know that on almost any block you can slip into a great restaurant for a nourishing meal to warm the soul. After all, this is the city where good taste stems not only from the fashion showrooms of Seventh Avenue but the kitchens of talented chefs who establish reputations with their signature dishes. How fortunate then that Visa and "Taste of New York" afford the opportunity to not only enjoy the best of what New York has to offer but the chance to help a good cause, Citymeals-on-Wheels, in the process. (Every time you charge a meal using your Visa® card at restaurants participating in this and other "Taste of New York" features, you'll also contribute to this nonprofit organization that delivers hot meals to the homebound elderly.)**

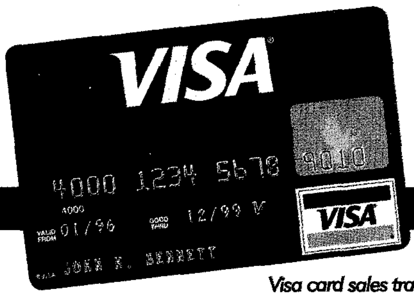
**ARCADIA • 21 East 62nd Street 212-223-2900** • To pinpoint the origin of "New American Cuisine," look no further than master chef Anne Rosenzweig's kitchen at Arcadia. A true pioneer who elevated indigenous American cooking to an art form, Rosenzweig continues her masterful ways with flavor, texture, and color, in combinations that always surprise and delight. The tasting menu at dinner is nothing short of a gastronomic journey through the chef's mind: corn cakes with crème fraîche and two caviars, along with a mustard-crisped crab cake in homemade tartar sauce make wonderful starters, as does a caramelized pineapple tart with mousse of foie gras. For dinner: Delicate chimney-smoked lobster is bathed in tarragon butter. The crispy roast chicken atop a truffled potato stew is moist and flavorful. The courses go on. At dessert, Arcadia's spin on the classic banana split sundae is pure genius, worth discovering for yourself. For true oenophiles, along with its regular list, Arcadia offers a special reserve wine list that is a trove of vintage treasures from France, Italy, Germany, and California. Not to be missed.

**COCO PAZZO TEATRO • 235 West 46th Street 212-827-4222** • Pino Luongo on Broadway. It is somehow fitting that this tall Italian restaurateur chose the dizzying atmosphere of the Theatre District for spreading his gospel of Tuscan cooking. A showman in every sense of the word, Luongo's year-old, roomy restaurant with its comfortable banquettes and vaguely neoclassical décor, reflects its owner's modern elegance and theatrical sensibility. Eat light at lunch (or dinner) with a thin-crust pizza bianca bubbling with stringy robiola cheese and accented with truffle oil. A salad of arugula and shaved parmesan is the perfect accompaniment. At dinner (or lunch), spicy *fusilli puttanesca*, a hearty medley of garlicky tomato sauce, calamata olives, capers, and anchovies, more than satisfies, as does roasted salmon. It is served atop a hill of fresh spinach lightly sautéed in garlic and oil. Baked Alaska with pumpkin gelato on a chocolate brownie base wins ovations from dessert lovers. The selection of wines by the glass is always intriguing and the prices fair. Bravo Signore Luongo!

**LA COLOMBE D'OR • 134 East 26th Street • 212-689-0666**
My earliest introduction to Provençal cooking came with the discovery many years ago of this tiny, romantic hideaway tucked between two brownstones on an otherwise nondescript downtown street. Here they pay homage to garlic, ripe tomatoes, olives, and herbs of every sort. Chef Naj Zougari dresses seafood, poultry, and meat in varying combinations of the above, sometimes as a fragrant sauce, other times simply as edible garnish. The bouillabaisse will bowl you over; the tapenade is superb. Cassoulet lovers be alerted: La Colombe D'Or now serves this wonderful casserole daily. The rich Mediterranean cuisine here begs for simple yet pronounced country wine (*vins du pays*) or a more complex Rhône or Burgundy. The award-winning wine list will be more than accommodating, regardless of which way your palate points. *Dine here and you'll want to spend a year in Provence. Sans typewriter.*

**TONY MAY'S SAN DOMENICO • 240 Central Park South 212-265-5959** • The crown jewel in Tony May's collection of tasteful restaurants, this kitchen of Brescia-born Odette Fada elevates Italian cuisine well beyond the standard. The buffalo mozzarella appetizer tantalizes: a tasty pair of plump pillows perched upon a raft of trimmed *haricot vert* moored to slices of fresh tomato. Pesto-infused olive oil covers the dish in Rauschenberg squiggles. Puréed *borlotti* bean soup chock full of *farro* is hearty but heavenly. Crispy *cotoletta alla Milanese* is so deliciously similar to the way it's prepared in Italy's fashion capital one can almost hear arias from La Scala. Though difficult, leave room for dessert because the warm chocolate polenta soufflé, wading in a pool of white chocolate sauce, is too divine to pass up. The list of outstanding Italian wines, personally selected by Mr. May, is an embarrassment of riches, from rare Chianti Classico Reservas to gems from Veneto and Tuscany. ★

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVEN SALERNO



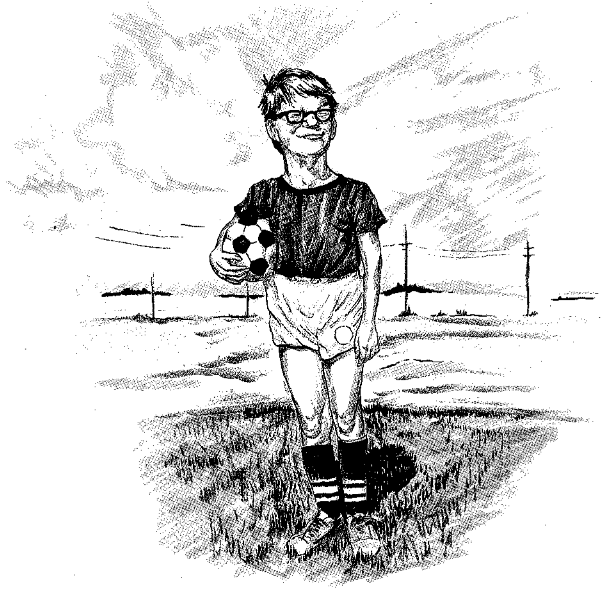
**Visa has guaranteed a $100,000 minimum contribution to Citymeals-on-Wheels related to Visa card sales transactions at participating restaurant locations through 12/31/97. Void where prohibited or restricted.*

delightful freshness; the opulence of the paintings of the Doge's Palace and the Palazzo Dario aflame in dying light is dazzling. Organized by Joachim Pissarro (great-grandson of the painter) for the Kimbell Art Museum, in Fort Worth, the show is admirably focussed, with just sixty-five canvases to savor, thereby avoiding the numbing curatorial overkill so common nowadays. Through Jan. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**Americas Society,** Park Ave. at 68th St. (249-8950)—"Potosí: Colonial Treasures and the Bolivian City of Silver," a beautifully mounted exhibition of paintings, sculptures, and silver objects from the great colonial silver-mining center. The show includes a dazzling roomful of beaten and repoussé silver objects—plaques, candlesticks, and censers; a flamboyant monstrance studded with emeralds, amethysts, and opals; even a priest's festival hat in silver atop a velvet cap, with little bells trailing behind. Yet the powerful folk sculptures of Jesus, Mary, and the saints, many of them borrowed from churches and convents in Bolivia, are the most wonderful objects here. Through Dec. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

**Jewish Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"Camille Pissarro in the Caribbean, 1850-55," a collection of early works by an artist who became a leader of the French Impressionist school. Through Nov. 16. . . . ¶ "Facing the New World: Jewish Portraits in Colonial and Federal America." Through Jan. 11. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

**Museo del Barrio,** Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (831-7272)—"Taíno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture from the Caribbean" chronicles the religious and secular life of some of the islands' original inhabitants. The few words from the Taíno language that survive in English ("barbecue," "canoe," "hammock," "hurricane") offer hints about this civilization, but much more can be gleaned from the artifacts collected here: worked-seashell amulets, three-pointed stones dedicated to the cassava gods, wooden chairs carved with animal figures for the local chieftains, vomit-inducing bone spatulas used by shamans to prepare the body for the ingestion of sacred hallucinogens. Through March 29. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)



*Self-portrait by Keith Mayerson (Gorney).*

**New York Public Library,** Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (869-8089)—"Dry Drunk: The Culture of Tobacco in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Europe" details early medicinal uses for the New World herb (e.g., in the treatment of asthma, labor pains, the plague) and charts its appearances in art and jeremiad. Print Gallery (third floor); through Jan. 3. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)*

**Larry Rivers**—Paintings and drawings that pay homage to Audubon, the plumage of American birds, and the snug outfits of women in the Hamptons. Through Nov. 29. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays.)

**Robert Weinstock**—Judeo-Christian images (the burning bush, the lion and the lamb) fashioned out of the colored foil from chocolate bars and framed in stuffed-animal fur. Like a children's edition of the Bible, they're simultaneously sweet and threatening. Through Dec. 6. (Giampietro, 25 E. 73rd St. 861-8571.)

**"The Architecture of Independence"**—Architectural models and drawings and photographs of the realized projects of three architects from India (Charles Correa, Achyut Kanvinde, Balkrishna Doshi) and one from Bangladesh (Muzharul Islam). Through Dec. 3. (Urban Center Galleries, 457 Madison Ave., at 50th St. 753-1722.)

get very close to the paper
to where your nose
is 5 inches away

start drawing

stop when the work
is 18 feet by 44 feet

U.S. Debut Exhibition Puck Building Houston & Lafayette Nov 11-20 12-8pm www.thinklikeamano.com

**"Forms and Rhythms"**—Paintings, sculptures, and watercolors by Calder, Davis, and Léger. Through Dec. 23. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. 752-5135.)

**"The New Objectivity: Realism in Weimar-Era Germany"**—Wandering through this intimate show, you feel as though you've been transported to a softly lit Weimar living room. There is a wall of unromanticized nudes (the blue paper of Otto Dix's charcoal-and-gouache "Falling Girl" lends his ambiguous drawing a skewed eroticism) and another of unsentimental drawings of children. Several pictures, including Hans Grundig's "Man and Woman on a Bench" and Bruno Voigt's "Suburban Café," achieve the effortless modern affect that so much contemporary painting strives to reproduce by calculation. In Albert Bloch's ethereal "Group of Three," the seated trio seem to be equal parts snowmen and ghosts, imprisoned in a surreal room of ice—but a little cartoon dog in the corner and a pair of Guston-like shoes make you want to laugh. Through Nov. 8. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734.)

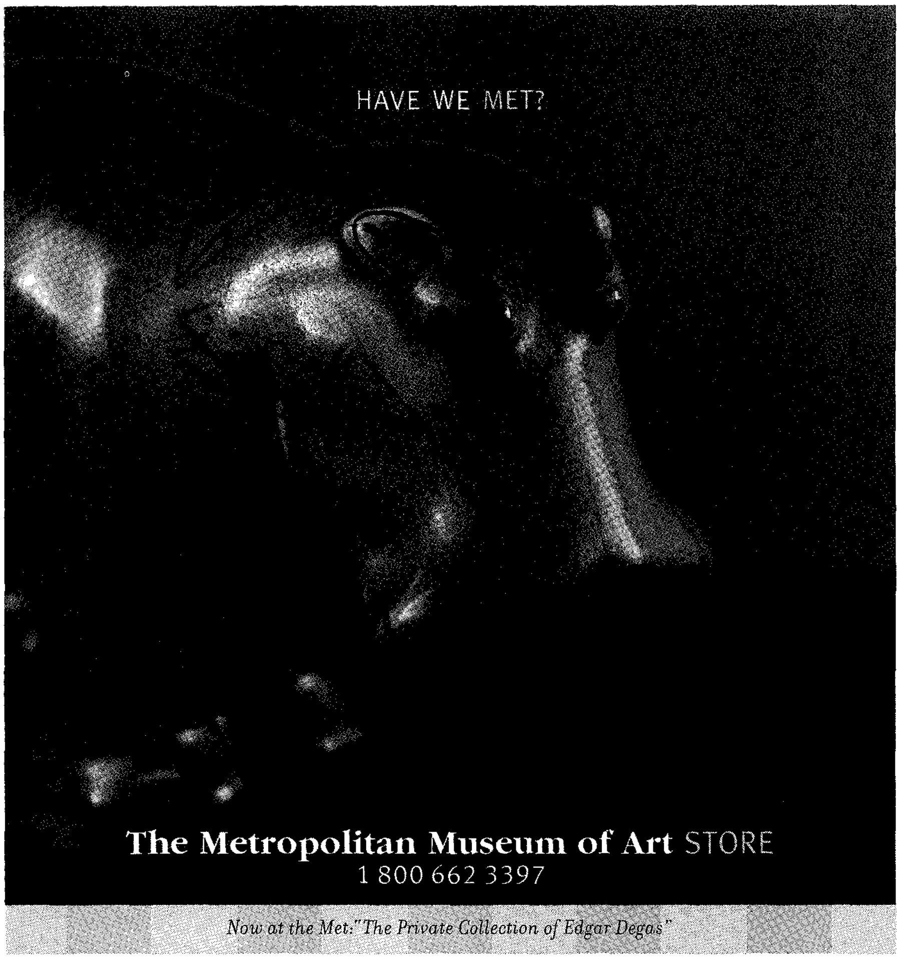
**Short List**—**FANNY BRENNAN,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through Nov. 8. . . . **RUDY BURCKHARDT** and **JOE BRAINARD,** De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Both shows through Nov. 29. . . . **ENRICO DONATI,** Davidson, 41 E. 57th St. 759-7555. Through Nov. 15. . . . **YVES KLEIN,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through Nov. 29. . . . **FRANZ KLINE,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Through Jan. 17. . . . **BARBARA KRUGER,** Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Through Dec. 20. . . . **GRACE KNOWLTON,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through Nov. 29. . . . **SOL LE WITT,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through Jan. 3 (see also the Chelsea Short List). . . . **CARLO MARIA MARIANI,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510. Through Nov. 29. . . . **PIET MONDRIAN AND AD REINHARDT,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through Dec. 13. . . . **ISABEL DE OBALDÍA,** Martin, 23 E. 73rd St. 288-2213. Through Nov. 22. . . . **THEODORE ROSZAK** and **FREDERICK J. SYKES,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Both shows through Nov. 15. . . . **BURTON SILVERMAN,** Wunderlich, 50 W. 57th St. 974-8444. Through Nov. 22. . . . **PAT STEIR,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. . . . **MAY STEVENS,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through Nov. 29. . . . **JOYCE TREIMAN,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through Nov. 22. . . . **ANDRE VON MORISSE,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767. Through Nov. 22.

### GALLERIES—CHELSEA

**Carroll Dunham**—New paintings in aggressively unpleasant colors. The artist's pictures continue to straddle the fence between abstraction and cartoonish representation—a familiar situation these days. That familiarity is in part an index of Dunham's influence among young painters; the recent two-gallery "Project Painting" show was in some respects a School of Dunham exhibition. The little homunculi that populate his pictures are getting more hysterical—they've become screaming mouths chomping down on wormlike phalli. Through Nov. 15. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100.)

**Cy Twombly**—Paintings and works on paper from the sixties and seventies. On a purely stylistic level, Twombly is perhaps the most influential painter of the post-Abstract Expressionist generation. The nervous scribbles and handwriting; the suggestive, typically sexualized biomorphic blobs; the fastidiously manicured sloppiness: all these elements recur regularly in the work of younger painters. This show includes two of the artist's "blackboard" paintings—chalklike drawing on gray-black grounds—and some ravishing drawings. Through Nov. 15. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

**Terry Winters**—A group of recent large-scale abstract paintings which indicates a shift in direction for the artist. His usual sensitive organic forms here give way to frenetic lines of paint in often rebarbative colors. Winters has found inspiration in unlikely places, e.g., European salon abstraction of the fifties; these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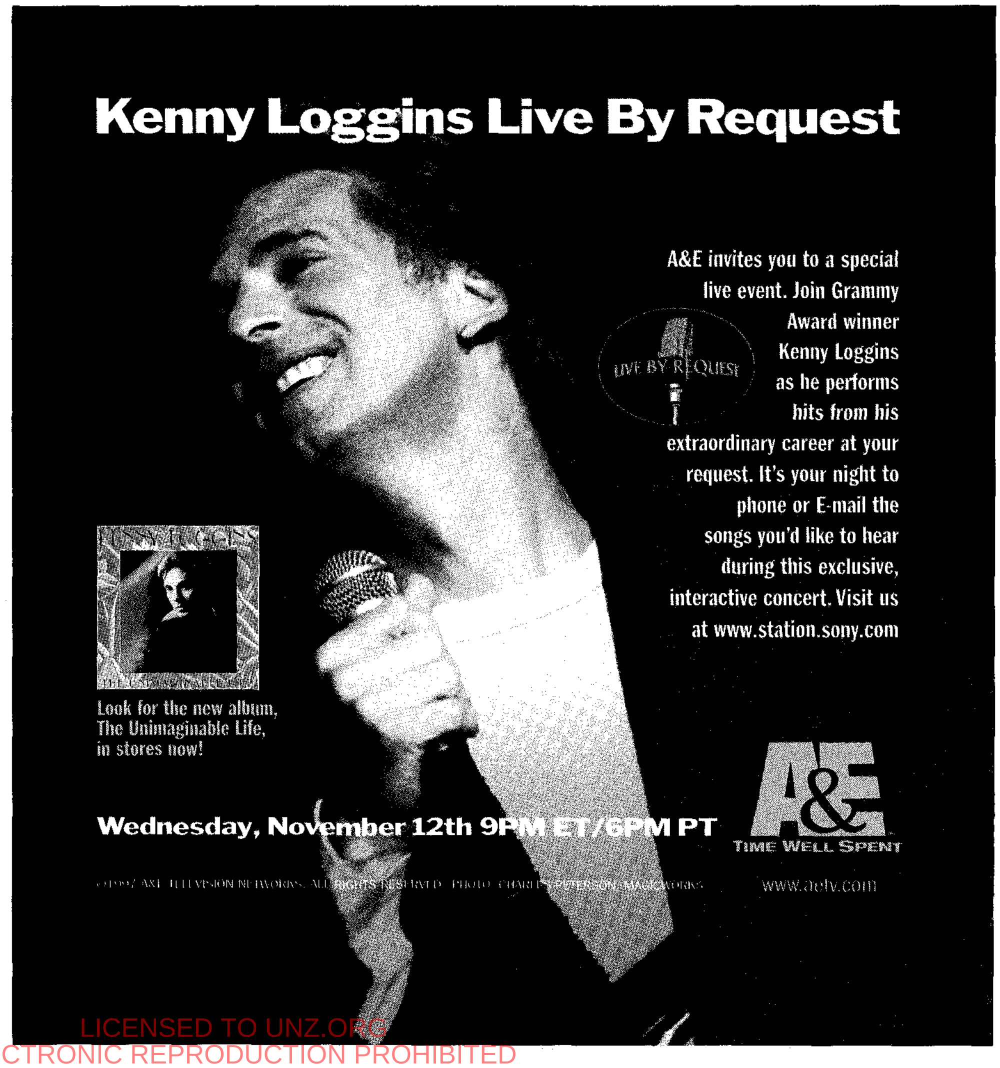
*Now at the Met: "The Private Collection of Edgar Degas"*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pictures are brash, loud, and aggressive, and among the best of his career. Through Dec. 24. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Opens at noon.)

**Short List**—**JAN BARACZ,** de Folin, 529 W. 20th St. 242-3434. Through Nov. 15. . . . **MATTHEW BARNEY,** Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300. Through Dec. 20. . . . **NINA BOVASSO,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through Nov. 29. . . . **GARY GISSLER,** Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through Nov. 29. . . . **RODNEY GRAHAM,** 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through Dec. 20. . . . **WILLIAM HAWKINS,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Nov. 14. . . . **JACQUELINE HUMPHRIES,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through Nov. 29. . . . **SOL LE WITT,** Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Through Nov. 22. . . . **LOREN MUNK,** Coploff, 526 W. 26th St. 674-1024. Through Nov. 29. . . . **PABLO SIQUIER,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Nov. 28.

## GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

**John Currin**—Wicked, subversive paintings, several of them of blond, pale, miniskirted women with breasts the size of basketballs (Daisy Mae times ten), rendered in a flat retro-seventies palette. In these and other pictures—notably "The Cripple," which depicts, with deadpan, ruthless accuracy, the Karen Carpenter-like vulnerability of a pretty woman who stands gripping a cane—you sense the artist's delight in negotiating the line between fascination and repulsion. Through Nov. 22. (Rosen, 130 Prince St. 941-0203.)

**Josiah McElheny**—"Non-Decorative Beautiful Objects," a stunning installation of glass objects through which the artist spins elaborate historical-fantastical sagas. In one museum case, McElheny has created goblets, vases, and other objects based on images in sixteenth-century paintings of the life of Christ. Smart and glamorous. Through Nov. 15. (A/C Project Room, 15 Renwick St. 219-8275.)

**Keith Mayerson**—Paintings and drawings of a diverse band of role models and love objects, including Frankenstein, Keanu Reeves, and Alain Delon. Through Nov. 29. (Gorney, 100 Greene St. 966-4480.)

**Helen Sadowski and John Tursi**—Two artists-in-residence at the Living Museum, the art program at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center, in Queens. Sadowski presents thirty striped drawings, à la Sean Scully; Tursi offers installations, including one of tree-trunk segments, wrapped in yellow tissue, which he calls "dinosaur bones." Through Nov. 14. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. 780-0071.)

**Julian Schnabel**—Portraits, painted over the past year in New York and Spain, of the artist's friends and family, rendered in the style of Spanish court painting under the Hapsburgs and the first Bourbon kings. Through Dec. 13. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224.)

**Haim Steinbach**—An exhibition of photographs, shelf works (a pair of worn foam insoles coupled with a tidy pile of wine corks), and recent installations, all of which attest to the artist's keen feeling for the imaginative power of objects. An industrial shelving structure, "Backyard Story," features logs, bright-orange plastic jack-o'-lanterns, Weber grills, and old clothes hanging from a line. The surreal "Mothers, Daughters, Children," contained in a room ringed with gray shelving, brings together stacks of elementary-school chairs imbedded in sand, a brand-new Maytag refrigerator, old shoes, and a floating, half-deflated red balloon; on one shelf, a monitor plays the video "37 Stories About Leaving Home," by Shelly Silver, in which Japanese women discuss such subjects as courage, lying, secrets, and death. Through Dec. 6. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160.)

**"Pagan Stories: The Situations of Narrative in Recent Art"**—Works in various mediums by several fashionable young artists, including Kara Walker, Anna Gaskell, and Georgina Starr. The real show, though, is curator Janet Kraynak's accompanying text: choking on jargon, it's auto-parodistic. Through Nov. 15. (Apex, 291 Church St. 431-5270.)

**Short List**—**DONALD BAECHLER,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through Dec. 6. . . . **PHIL BOWER,** Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. 334-3455. Through Nov. 23. . . . **BRENDA GOODMAN,** Steele, 420 West Broadway. 941-8388. Through Nov. 29. . . . **SIOBHÁN HAPASKA,** Bonakdar, 130 Prince St. 925-8035. Through Nov. 26. . . . **KOMAR & MELAMID,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 226-3232. Through Nov. 15. . . . **RAYMOND PETTIBON,** Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074. Through Nov. 29. . . . **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG,** Dranoff, 591 Broadway. 966-0153. Closed Tuesdays; through Dec. 6. . . . **SUSAN ROTHENBERG,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through Dec. 13. . . . **DAVID SANDLIN,** Gracie Mansion gallery, 54 St. Marks Pl. 505-7055. Through Nov. 22. . . . **T. J. WILCOX,** Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5261. Closed Tuesdays; through Nov. 15. . . . **KITTY SWEET WINSLOW,** Davies, 23 Commerce St. 243-6840. Through Nov. 15. . . . **JOAN WITEK,** Kramarsky, 560 Broadway. 966-6601. Through Nov. 15.

*An untitled photograph by Jules Backus, at Cooper Union.*

## AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

**Christie's**—Nov. 10: The much anticipated sale of more than a hundred twentieth-century art works from the collection of Victor and Sally Ganz, including paintings by Picasso, Rauschenberg, Stella, and Johns. . . . ¶ Nov. 11-12: Impressionist paintings. The opening session includes two major oils by Monet (plus some less imposing ones), and a complement of Renoirs, Gauguins, and Sisleys. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.)

**Sotheby's**—Nov. 6-7: Arcade auctions of modestly priced Impressionist and modern paintings. . . . ¶ Nov. 7-8: A sale of prints, ranging from Old Masters to twentieth-century artists. . . . ¶ Nov. 9: Contemporary prints. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

**Phillips**—Twentieth-century paintings, drawings, and sculptures, including notable works by Rodin, Vlaminck, Chagall, and Pollock. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. Nov. 11.)

**Doyle**—Nov. 5: Furniture, paintings, and decorative art. . . . ¶ Nov. 6: Nineteenth- and twentieth-century European paintings and sculptures. . . . ¶ Nov. 11: Old Master, modern, and contemporary prints, including a complete set of Jacques Callot's etchings "The Twelve Apostles" (printed in 1631) and works by Manet, Braque, and Diebenkorn. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

**Print Fair**—Now in its seventh annual installment, this comprehensive gathering, organized by the International Fine Print Dealers Association, is a must for collectors of works on paper. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Nov. 5-9. For information, call 777-5218.)

# PHOTOGRAPHY

**Jules Backus** (1944-96)—"Ambush in the Streets." Often *pochoirs*, or stencils, are used on the otherwise ordinary stone, brick, and plaster walls of Paris buildings to create whimsical or political street art. Backus's views of them are as quiet and winsome as a stroll down a Parisian *petite rue*. Through Dec. 6. (Cooper Union's Foundation Building, Third Ave. at 7th St. 353-4214. Open Mondays through Fridays, noon to 7, Saturdays, noon to 5.)

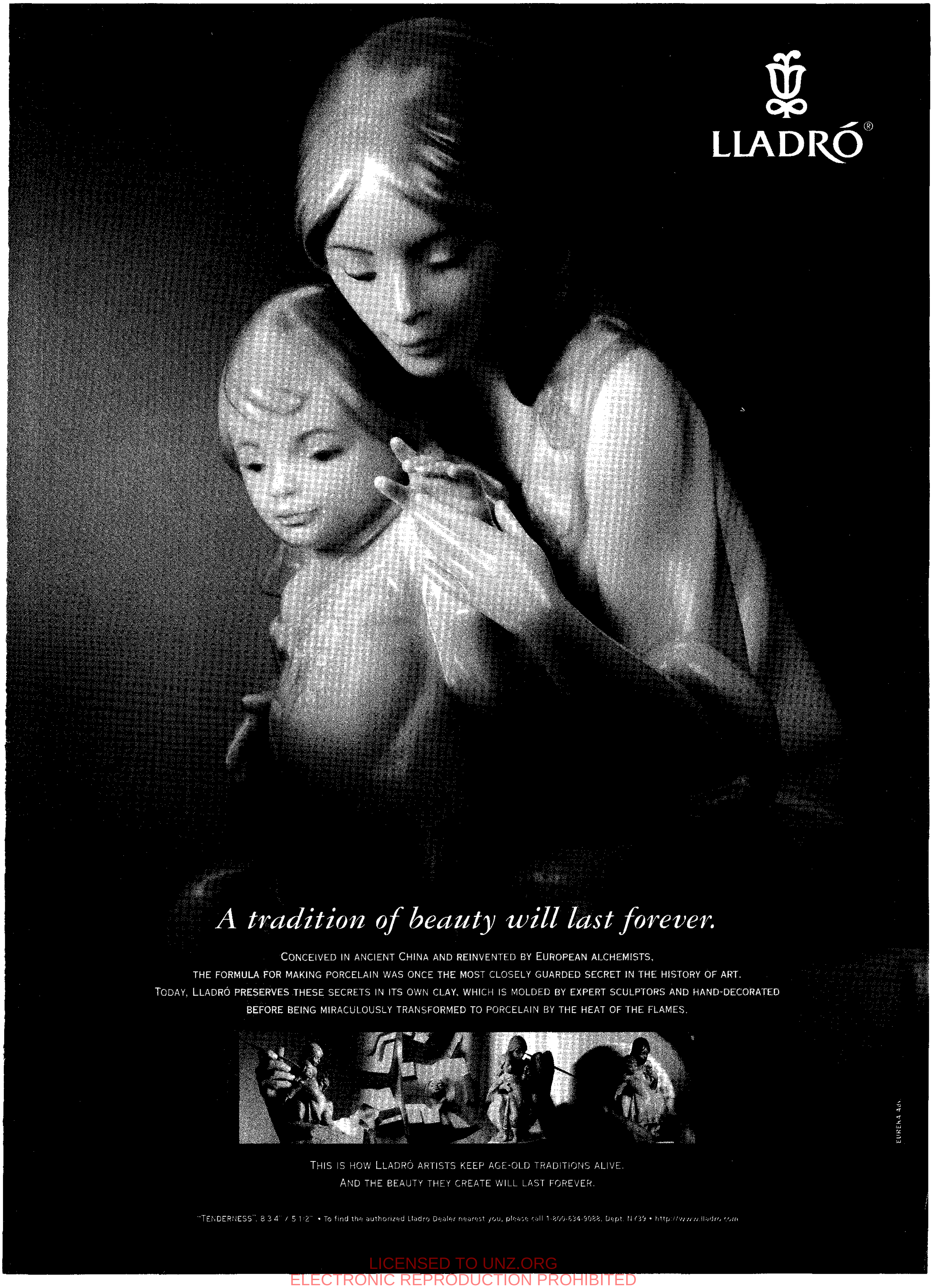
**Sally Mann**—Southern gothic on 57th Street. The artist's recent Georgia and Virginia landscapes are chimerical and expressive, if a shade self-conscious—a drawback not found in her earlier series "Immediate Family," perhaps because of the strength there of each child's personality. That said, more than a few of these large prints are stunning. The subject isn't so much landscape as the history of photography: a desolate, rolling field comes straight out of the Civil War views of Brady or Gardner, complete with what are meant to be cracks in a glass plate; an exquisite overgrown canal hints at Gustave Le Gray; a lone marble urn whispers Atget. Through Nov. 8. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070.)

**"Constructivism in Russian Photography, 1923 to 1936"**—Vintage works by such luminaries as Alexander Rodchenko, El Lissitzky, and Georgi Zelma. Through Dec. 13. (Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363.)

**"Eye of the Beholder: Photographs from the Avon Collection"**—Close to a hundred photographs, all by women, that explore various definitions of beauty. Among the artists represented are Berenice Abbott, Mary Ellen Mark, Lillian Bassman, Jan Groover, Lotte Jacobi, and Carrie Mae Weems. Through Nov. 13. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

**International Center of Photography**—"Brett Weston in New York," a selection of seventy-five photographs from 1943 to 1945, by an artist better known for his landscapes and nature studies. Through Nov. 30. . . . ¶ "Soul of the Game: Images & Voices of Street Basketball" presents the black-and-white work of sports photographer John Huet. Through Nov. 19. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

**Short List**—**TOM BARIL,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Dec. 6. . . . **STEPHEN BARKER,** Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753. Through Nov. 8. . . . **MORTON BARTLETT** and **EUGENE VON BRUENCHENHEIN,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Both shows through Nov. 15. . . . **ERWIN BLUMENFELD** and **ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. 226-0056. Both shows through Dec. 6. . . . **BILL COSTA,** Wessel and O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. 242-8811. Open Sundays; through Nov. 16. . . . **MÁRIO CRAVO NETO,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Through Dec. 6. . . . **RALSTON CRAWFORD** and **RAY K. METZKER,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Both shows through Nov. 29. . . . **VALDIR CRUZ,** Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059. Through Jan. 10. . . . **JIMMY DE SANA,** Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366. Through Nov. 29. . . . **JOHN DIVOLA,** Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through Nov. 15. . . . **JAMES FEE,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through Nov. 15. . . . **RICHARD MISRACH,** Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200. Through Nov. 15. . . . **LÁSZLÓ MOHOLY-NAGY** and **MICHAL ROVNER,** Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Both shows through Nov. 29. . . . **JOHN O'REILLY,** Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Through Nov. 15. . . . **SUSAN RANKAITIS,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through Dec. 13. . . . **AARON ROSE,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219. Through Nov. 8. . . . **GARY SCHNEIDER,** P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Through Nov. 15. . . . **LARRY TOWELL,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; through Dec. 13. . . . **NEIL WINOKUR,** Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Nov. 15.



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# CLASSICAL MUSIC

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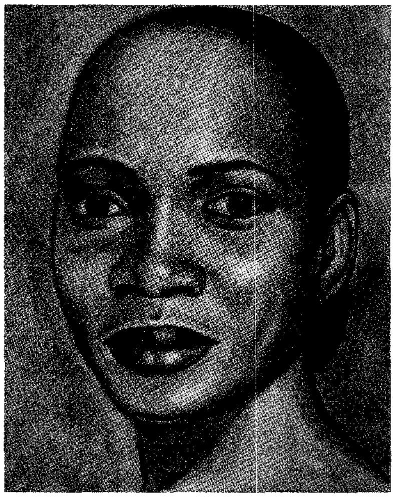
## OPERA

**Metropolitan Opera**—DON GIOVANNI, with Deborah Riedel, Amanda Roocroft, Maria Bayo, Stanford Olsen, Dwayne Croft, and Ildebrando D'Arcangelo; conducted by Daniel Beckwith. (Nov. 5 and Nov. 8 at 8.) . . . With Paul Plishka instead of Mr. D'Arcangelo. (Nov. 11 at 8.) . . . IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA, with Sonia Ganassi, Bruce Ford, Vladimir Chernov, Mr. Plishka, and Samuel Ramey; Edoardo Müller. (Nov. 6 at 8.) . . . With Theodora Hanslowe, Jorge Lopez-Yañez, Mr. Chernov, John Del Carlo, and Giorgio Surjan; Mr. Müller. (Nov. 10 at 7:30.) . . . LA CENERENTOLA, with Cecilia Bartoli, Ramón Vargas, Alessandro Corbelli, Simone Alaimo, and Michele Pertusi; James Levine. (Nov. 7 at 8.) . . . TANNHÄUSER, with Sharon Sweet, Jeannine Altmeyer, Dawn Upshaw, Wolfgang Schmidt, Bryn Terfel, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; Mr. Levine. (Nov. 8 at 12:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

**New York City Opera**—Handel's XERXES, in English, with a cast that includes soprano Amy Burton, mezzo-sopranos Lorraine Hunt and Jennifer Lane, countertenor David Daniels, and bass-baritone Jan Opalach. (Nov. 5 at 7:30 and Nov. 8 at 1:30.) . . . DON PASQUALE. (Nov. 6 at 7:30 and Nov. 9 at 1:30.) . . . MACBETH. (Nov. 7 at 8.) . . . The opening performance of MARCO POLO, by Tan Dun. (Nov. 8 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

**Amato Opera Company**—"Aïda," brought within this hundred-seat house's conception of grandeur. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Nov. 7-8 at 7:30. Through Nov. 16.)

**"Il Caffè d'Amore"**—A new stage work built from seventeenth-century songs and cantatas (by Monteverdi, Frescobaldi, and others), performed by the Mannes Camerata. (West Park Presbyterian Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 86th St. Nov. 7-8 at 8. For information about tickets, call 229-5488. Through Nov. 16.)



*Soprano Barbara Hendricks, appearing with the New York Philharmonic.*

THOMAS J. CURRY

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**New York Philharmonic**—Charles Dutoit conducts three excerpts from Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" (the Overture and the Countess's two arias, featuring soprano Barbara Hendricks); Barber's Adagio for Strings and "Knoxville: Summer of 1915" (also with Ms. Hendricks); and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 5-8 at 8.)

**Orchestra of St. Luke's**—Roberto Abbado conducts Schubert's C-Major Overture "in the Italian Style," Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Awadagin Pratt), Schoenberg's "Begleitmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene," and Prokofiev's "Classical" Symphony. The Schoenberg work, whose title might be translated as "Music to Accompany a Moving-Picture Scene," is a particular curiosity. It was written in 1929-30 at the request of the Heinrichshofen publishing firm, which had asked several composers to create scores for films that existed only in their imaginations. Schoenberg, who was always ambivalent about the idea of writing music for *real* films, responded with this nine-minute piece; its tripartite subtitle—"Impending Danger, Fear, Catastrophe"—clearly suggests the Expressionist flavor of the scene he had in mind. So, of course, does the score. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 5 at 8.)

**New York Pops**—Broadway classics, with singers Jeanne Lehman and Davis Gaines; Skitch Henderson conducts. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 7 at 8.)

**Orpheus Chamber Orchestra**—The conductorless ensemble performs Mozart's Symphony No. 14; Copland's "Five Poems of Emily Dickinson" and a set of orchestral songs by Wilhelm Stenhammar (featuring mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter); and Beethoven's Symphony No. 1. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 8 at 8.)

**Irish Chamber Orchestra**—Violinist Fionnuala Hunt leads two concerts, with pianist John O'Conor. Nov. 8 at 8: Elgar's Serenade for Strings, Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 449), Raymond Deane's "Dekatriad," and Britten's "Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge." (Colden Center, Queens College, Flushing. 718-793-8080.) . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 7:30: The Mozart concerto as above, plus Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings and works by Gerald Barry and Respighi. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 378-0248.)

**Met Orchestra**—James Levine leads an Italianate program: Rossini's "Semiramide" Overture; Haydn's Sinfonia Concertante in B-Flat Major; opera arias by Handel, Gluck, and Haydn (featuring mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli); and Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 (the "Italian"). (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 9 at 3.)

**Musica Viva**—The choir and orchestra performs Bach's Cantata No. 56 (with baritone Gotthold Schwarz), the première of Howard Rovic's "St. Jakob's Church in Rothenburg," and Wolfgang Fortner's "Herr, bleibe bei uns." Walter Klauss directs. (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. 794-3646. Nov. 9 at 7.)

**Jupiter Symphony**—Jens Nygaard conducts Mozart's Symphony No. 35 (the "Haffner"), Fauré's "Masques et Bergamasques," and Moszkowski's E-Major Piano Concerto (with David Buechner). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Nov. 10 at 2 and 7, and Nov. 11 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

**Moscow Virtuosi**—Vladimir Spivakov leads Chausson's Concerto in D Major for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet (featuring Mr. Spivakov as violinist and Alexander Korsantiya as the piano soloist), Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's "Prologue and Variations," and Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony (Op. 110a, arranged by Rudolph Barshai from the composer's String Quartet No. 8) and his "Rayok." (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 10 at 8.)

**Philadelphia Orchestra**—Simon Rattle oversees Mahler's vast Symphony No. 2 (the "Resurrection"), with soprano Christine Schäfer, contralto Nathalie Stutzmann, and the Philadelphia Singers Chorale. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 11 at 8.)

## RECITALS

**Brentano String Quartet**—The foursome offers Beethoven's "Grosse Fuge" and his Quartet in B-Flat Major (Op. 130), as well as Schoenberg's "Ode to Napoleon" (with narrator Richard Lalli and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott). (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 5 at 8.)

**Settings of Heine**—Baritone Paul Rowe and pianist Ophra Yerushalmi explore ways that Schumann, Liszt, Wagner, and Wolpe (among others) responded to the verse of Heinrich Heine. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 5 at 8.)

**Tragedy Tonight**—Narrator Claire Bloom, baritone Kurt Ollmann, and pianist Brian Zeger present literary and musical works based on Greek tragedies. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347. Nov. 6 at 6:15.)

**José van Dam**—The baritone, assisted by pianist Maciej Pikulski, performs songs by Brahms, Strauss, Duparc, Fauré, and Ravel. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 6 at 7:30.)

**Bargemusic**—Nov. 6 at 7:30: Violinist Mark Peskanov, cellist Alban Gerhardt, and pianist Rita Sloan perform piano trios by Schubert (his "Notturno"), Shostakovich (in E Minor), and Beethoven (the "Ghost"). . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 4: The Schubert and Shostakovich works as above, plus Schumann's Piano Quartet (with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg as violinist, Mr. Peskanov as violist, Mr. Gerhardt, and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

**Sonic Boom Festival**—The annual showcase of twentieth-century music continues this week with a pair of programs at Miller Theatre. Nov. 6 at 8: ModernWorks! performs music written by Americans (Elliott Carter, Lee Hyla, Aaron Jay Kernis, Bernard Rands, and Martin Breznick) during residencies in Italy. . . . ¶ Nov. 11 at 8: The New York New Music Ensemble offers premières of pieces by Milton Babbitt and Edmund Campion, in addition to works by Mel Powell, Wadada Leo Smith, and Jacob Druckman.

**New York Philomusica**—The chamber ensemble presents an all-Dvořák program. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 6 at 8.)

**András Schiff and Peter Serkin**—The eminent pianists team up for an evening of piano duets: Mozart's C-Minor Fugue (K. 426) and his D-Major Sonata (K. 448/375a), Reger's "Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Beethoven," and Busoni's "Fantasia Contrappuntistica." (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 7 at 8.)

**Ying String Quartet**—This ensemble of four siblings performs quartets by Verdi, Sheila Silver (her Second), and Smetana (his First). (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 7 at 8.)

**Haydn Festival**—An all-day exploration of the composer's life and works, a spillover from last summer's Bard Music Festival. Nov. 8 from 10 to 1: A symposium on architecture, patronage, and audiences in Haydn's time. (Kaplan Penthouse, Lincoln Center. Admission is free to people holding tickets for either of the ensuing concerts.) . . . ¶ At 3:30: A recital of the composer's late piano sonatas, part-songs, and chamber music. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ At 8: Haydn's oratorio "Il Ritorno di Tobia," with sopranos Andrea Folan and Frances Lucey, contralto Ewa Podles, tenor Steven Tharp, baritone Leon Williams, the Dessoff Choirs, and the American Symphony Orchestra, directed by Leon Botstein. (Alice Tully Hall. . . . **Note:** Lectures precede both concerts.)

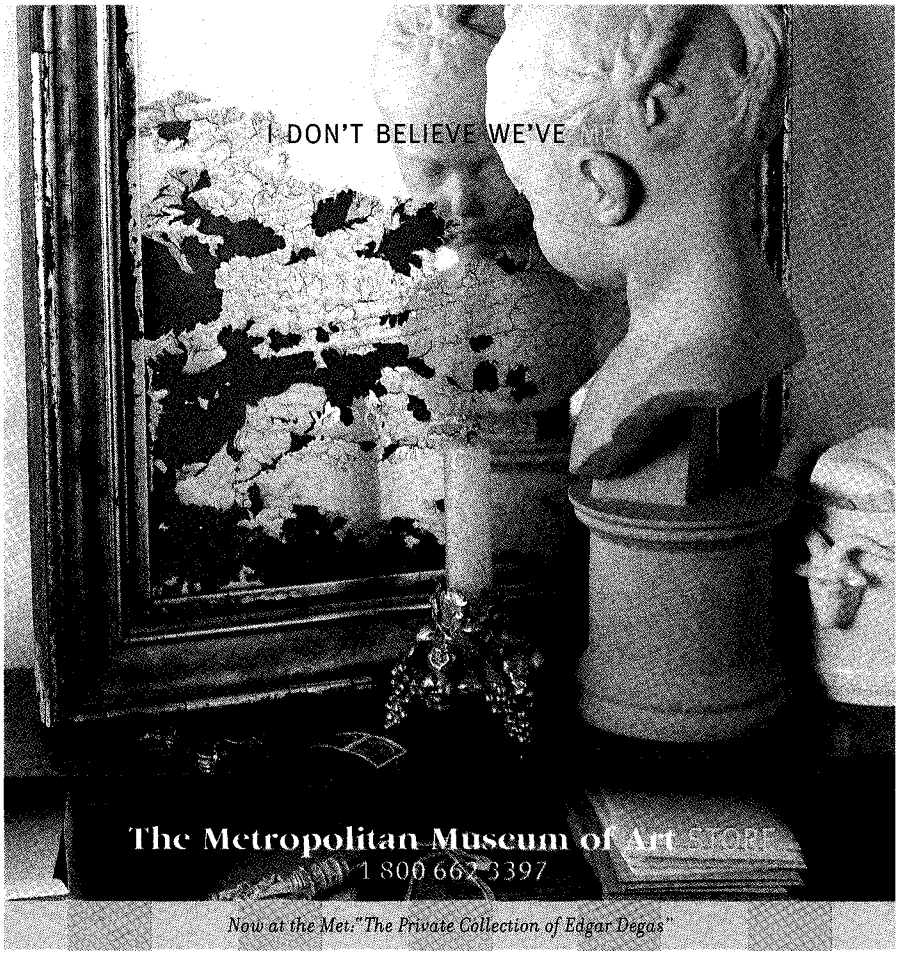
**Guarneri Quartet**—Performing Beethoven's String Quartets in E-Flat Major (Op. 127), G Major (Op. 18, No. 2), and C Major (Op. 59, No. 3). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 8 at 8.)

**New York Virtuoso Singers**—Works by Thea Musgrave, Ned Rorem, Eleanor Cory, James Bassi, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Augusta Read Thomas, directed by Harold Rosenbaum. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 8 at 8.)

**Ensemble for Early Music**—Performing music from Renaissance Florence, by Dufay (his motet "Nuper rosarum flores"), Bartolomeo Tromboncino, and Marchetto Cara. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Nov. 9 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

**Orlando Consort**—In its New York début recital, this quintet of English gentleman singers offers British music from the thirteenth century through the sixteenth, by Dunstable and others. Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. Nov. 9 at 4.)

**An die Musik**—The chamber group presents works by Schubert and Brahms (his C-Minor Piano Quartet), as well as the première of Bruce



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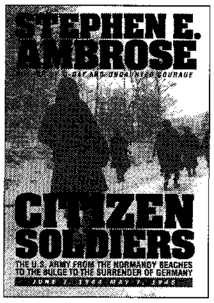
Discussion • Signing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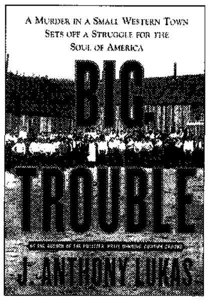
CITIZEN SOLDIERS
THE U.S. ARMY FROM THE NORMANDY BEACHES TO THE BULGE TO THE SURRENDER OF GERMANY
JUNE 7, 1944 - MAY 7, 1945

Bestselling author Stephen Ambrose will discuss and sign copies of *Citizen Soldiers*. This sequel to *D-Day* follows the U.S. Army from the day after D-Day to the surrender of Germany.

Panel Discussion on author J. Anthony Lukas

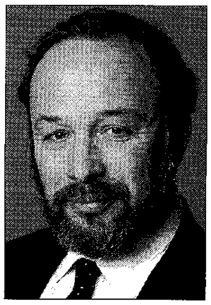
Tuesday, November 11th, 7:30-8:30 PM
Upper West Side
2289 Broadway at 82nd Street
Panel Discussion

Authors Nicholas Lemann, Alan Brinkley and Jonathan Yardley will participate in a panel discussion to celebrate the release of J. Anthony Lukas' posthumous book, *Big Trouble*, in which he tells the true story of an astonishing murder in a small western town.


A MURDER IN A SMALL WESTERN TOWN SETS OFF A STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF AMERICA
BIG TROUBLE
J. ANTHONY LUKAS

Joe Klein

Thursday, November 13th, 7:30-8:30 PM
Union Square, 33 East 17th Street
Reading • Signing



*The New Yorker* Series at Barnes & Noble Union Square welcomes author Joe Klein when he reads from and signs copies of his controversial political novel, *Primary Colors*.

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Adolphe's "Little Red Riding Hood" (with Dr. Ruth Westheimer narrating). (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 9 at 4.)

**NEW YORK VOCAL ARTS ENSEMBLE**—Performing vocal chamber works by Beethoven and Brahms. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Nov. 9 at 5.)

**VOICE OF ASHKENAZ INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**—A gathering dedicated to exploring German-Jewish musical traditions, with two public concerts in its lineup. Nov. 9 at 8:30: "From Berlin to Jerusalem," vocal and instrumental compositions by Samuel Adler, Kurt Weill, and other composers who emigrated from Germany; the program includes premières of works by Gershon Kingsley and Ofer Ben-Amots). (Merkin Concert Hall.) . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 8: Eight cantors and a hundred-and-fifty-voice choir perform works by Louis Lewandowski, Salomon Sulzer, and many others. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . **NOTE:** For information on the conference itself, call 678-8923.

**BENJAMIN SCHMID AND ALFONS KONTARSKY**—The Austrian violinist and the German pianist offer an all-Brahms recital. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 10 at 8.)

**ANDRÉ ISOIR**—The distinguished organist, who presides over the console at St. Germain-des-Prés in Paris, performs works by Jehan Titelouze, Nicolas de Grigny, Berlioz, Franck, and Tournemire (among others), as well as his own "Six Variations sur un Psaume Huguenot." (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Nov. 11 at 8.)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**"MECHANICAL MARVELS"**—Over the past thirteen years, with the help of computer-enhanced drawings, researchers at the Institute and Museum of the History of Science, at the University of Florence, have guided Italian artisans in the construction of full-scale models of the technological innovations of the Renaissance. Fifty of these intricate (and functional) creations, made from designs by Leonardo da Vinci and three of his predecessors, Filippo Brunelleschi, Mariano di Iacopo, and Francesco di Giorgio, are on view at the Liberty Street Gallery, in the World Financial Center. The models, along with interactive computer displays, show how the seeds of the Industrial Revolution were sown four centuries ago. Brunelleschi designed cranes and hoists to build his masonry dome on the cathedral in Florence. The Sienese engineer Francesco di Giorgio came up with devices such as the column lifter (notable for its incorporation of the worm screw and the tooth rack). And Leonardo's inventions are so numerous they get a few rooms of their own. (Battery Park City. Through March 1.)

**READINGS**—Nov. 6 at 7: By Galway Kinnell, from his poetry. (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, 1 Washington Mews. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 7: By Tryon Baldwin, Lauren MacIntyre, and Ben Schrank, from their fiction. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 6: By poets Eavan Boland, Jorie Graham, and Jane Miller, from the poetry of Sylvia Plath, in an evening hosted by critic Jacqueline Rose. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. No tickets necessary.)

**TALKS**—Nov. 5 at 6: *New Yorker* writer Alma Guillermoprieto discusses samba and Brazilian life. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5488.) . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 7: Critic Laurie Stone moderates a discussion about the ethics of memoirs, with *Nation* editor Art Winslow and writers Peter Trachtenberg, Phillip Lopate, and Lucy Grealy. (New School.) . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 6: John Flint, fellow of the Explorers Club & Royal Geographical Society, holds forth on marine navigation during the Renaissance. (Casa Italiana, New York University, 24 W. 12th St. No tickets necessary.)

**WALK**—Nov. 8 at 1: Historian Jeff Richman highlights Civil War-era graves on a stroll through Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery. For more information, call 718-788-8549.

## BOOK CURRENTS

### *G.I. Diaries*

WHO recalls that, in Canada, Veterans Day is Remembrance Day? It's a fair bet that Paul Fussell does. Remembrances—namely, the memoirs of veterans like himself—are what Fussell trusts to capture the experience of war. "There's a kind of empirical streak in me that believes one can get closer to or more distant from the truth," he says, "and I think memoirs tend to get closer to it than novels." After writing about the wartime literature produced by others in **THE GREAT WAR AND MODERN MEMORY** and **WARTIME** (both Oxford), the author got around to writing about his own Second World War army service (among other things) in last year's **DOING BATTLE** (Little, Brown).

WAR STORIES

ROSS MACDONALD

Fussell feels that the best memoirs of the First World War were written largely by the British, and his favorite of these is Robert Graves's **GOOD-BYE TO ALL THAT** (Doubleday). From the Second World War, he cites **BEFORE THEIR TIME** (Knopf), whose author, Robert Kotlowitz, later worked as a public-television producer in New York.

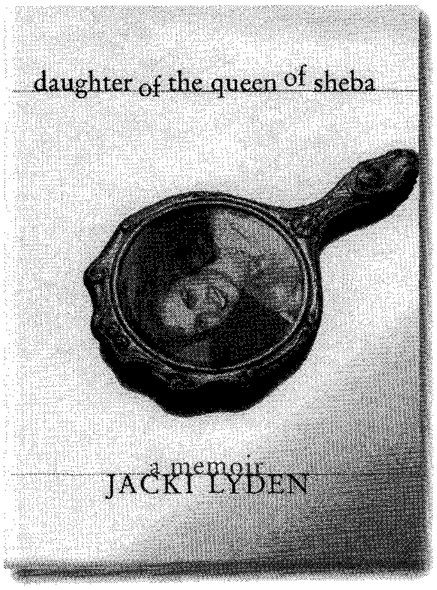
The Second World War also produced Eugene B. Sledge's memoir of the Marine Corps, **WITH THE OLD BREED** (Oxford). Fussell contributed an introduction to the paperback edition, and he calls the book a "hair-raising, unforgettable registration of the horrors of close combat by somebody who was deeply involved in it." He also admires **PACIFIC WAR DIARY, 1942-1945** (Houghton Mifflin), written secretly, against naval regulations, by Seaman First Class James J. Fahey during his time on the U.S.S. Montpelier. "Like the Sledge book," Fussell says, "it's wonderful because it's not literary, which is an odd thing for a literary critic to say. But I'm also a veteran, and I love Fahey's book because it's utterly unpretentious and sensitive and intelligent without any of the poppycock that goes with literary talk." A phrase from Fussell's essay "Thank God for the Atom Bomb" suggests what he values most in these memoirs: the straightforward account of "experience, sheer vulgar experience."

# A MEMOIR OF THE IMAGINATION ITSELF.

## NPR's Jacki Lyden reflects on life with a manic-depressive mother.

"Ms. Lyden's fierce, loving and often tortured memories of her mother form the backbone of this impressive book, a book that creates one of the most indelible portraits of a mother-daughter relationship to come along in years, a book that belongs on the shelf of classic memoirs, alongside *The Liar's Club* by Mary Karr and *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt."

—Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*



**Daughter of the Queen of Sheba**

*by Jacki Lyden*

The award-winning foreign correspondent for National Public Radio remembers what it was like to grow up with a manic-depressive mother, whose grand delusions were both an inspiration and a threat. With wit, candor and compassion, she paints a vivid portrait of insanity, devotion and survival and pays tribute to the special bond between mother and daughter.

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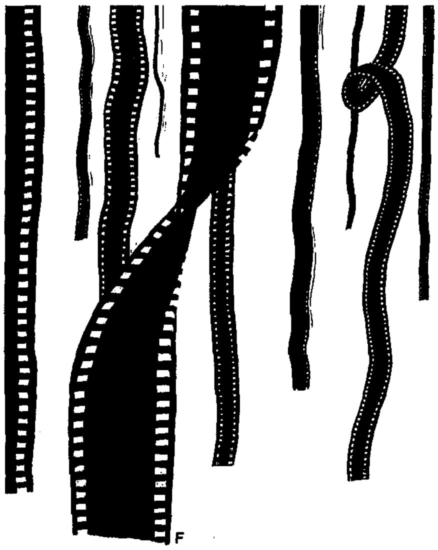


# THE MOVIES

## OPENING THIS WEEK

**Bean**—A comedy that brings Rowan Atkinson's madcap British TV character to the big screen. Directed by Mel Smith. Opening Nov. 7. (Lincoln Square and Village Theatre VII.)

**The Deli**—Writer-director John Gallagher and co-writer John Dorrian's look at the workers and the customers in a neighborhood store. With Brian Vincent, Mike Starr, Heather Matarazzo, Frank Vincent, Debi Mazar, and Ice T. Opening Nov. 7. (Sutton.)

**Eve's Bayou**—A crucial summer in the life of a black Louisiana family, as seen through the eyes of the ten-year-old title character (Jurnee Smollett), is the subject of a drama written and directed by Kasi Lemmons. With Samuel L. Jackson, Lynn Whitfield, Debbi Morgan, and Diahann Carroll. Opening Nov. 7. (84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, and Waverly.)

**The Knowledge of Healing**—A documentary about Tibetan medicine, directed by Franz Reichle. In Tibetan, Russian, Buryat, English, Swiss German, and German. Opening Nov. 5. (Film Forum.)

**Mad City**—John Travolta and Dustin Hoffman play a desperate out-of-work security guard and a demoted investigative television reporter, respectively, in a drama directed by Costa-Gavras. Opening Nov. 7. (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

**Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist**—A documentary directed by Kirby Dick. Opening Nov. 7. (Angelika Film Center.)

**Starship Troopers**—Paul Verhoeven's adventure about interplanetary war between humans and alien insects. With Casper Van Dien and Dina Meyer. Opening Nov. 7. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

**The Wings of the Dove**—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 7. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

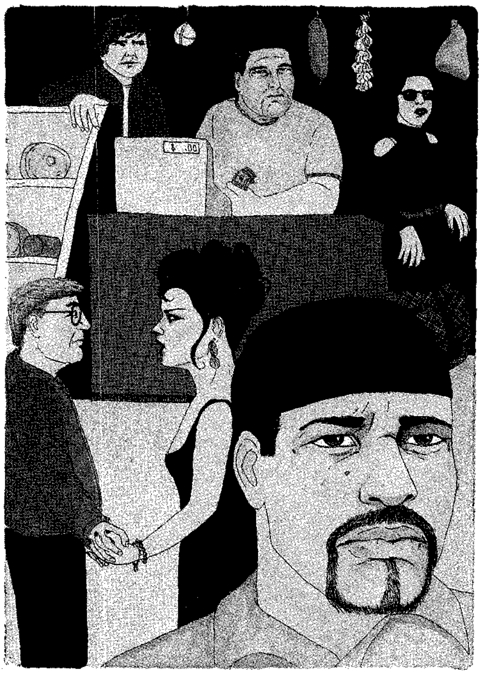
## FILM NOTES

*(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)*

**Boogie Nights**—Mark Wahlberg (once better known as Marky Mark) is a busboy who becomes the most successful product of the porn producer Jack Horner, played with a rangy bantam cock's swagger by Burt Reynolds. Wahlberg, who plays his part with baffled sweetness, is surrounded by the most interesting ensemble cast since "The Player," including William H. Macy, Julianne Moore, and Heather Graham. The picture is set in Los Angeles in the late seventies and early eighties, and, in the hands of the talented young director Paul Thomas Anderson, it gradually takes on the feel of a "Nashville"-like epic.—*Daphne Merkin* (10/13/97) (Cinema I, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

**Critical Care**—A black comedy, written by Steven S. Schwartz and directed by Sidney Lumet, that deals with the hospital care of terminally ill patients. With James Spader, Kyra Sedgwick, Helen Mirren, Anne Bancroft, and Albert Brooks. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

**The Devil's Advocate**—Keanu Reeves's blank acting style finds a fun, trashy vehicle in this John Grisham-meets-"Rosemary's Baby" thriller about a callow young Florida lawyer recruited to work at a Manhattan law firm run by Satan (Al Pacino, gamely parodying his shouting act from "Scent of a Woman"). The film's ridiculous premise is partly redeemed by wit, and its denunciation of modern evil—found in tabloid TV, rampant plastic surgery, greedy yuppies, and the jury-rigging enablers we call lawyers—is surprisingly sincere. What other recent movie has as its climax a long theological discussion of free will? As further proof that today's notorious figures thrive in the public spotlight, Don King and Senator Al D'Amato show up in cameos. Directed by Taylor Hackford.—*Sarah Kerr* (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)



*Opening Nov. 7, John Gallagher's "The Deli."*

LARA TOMLIN

**Fairy Tale: A True Story**—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Peter O'Toole) and Harry Houdini (Harvey Keitel) investigate photographs for evidence of the supernatural, in a film directed by Charles Sturridge. (Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 59th Street East Cinema, Guild, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

**Fashions of 1934**—Bette Davis at her blondest as a fashion artist professionally and romantically involved with suave, shady promoter William Powell. Elaborate piffle, directed by William Dieterle; it mixes fashions and show business in the sort of bewildering combination that used to come off the Hollywood assembly line. Choreography by Busby Berkeley.—*Pauline Kael* (Whitney Museum; Nov. 9 and Nov. 12-14.)

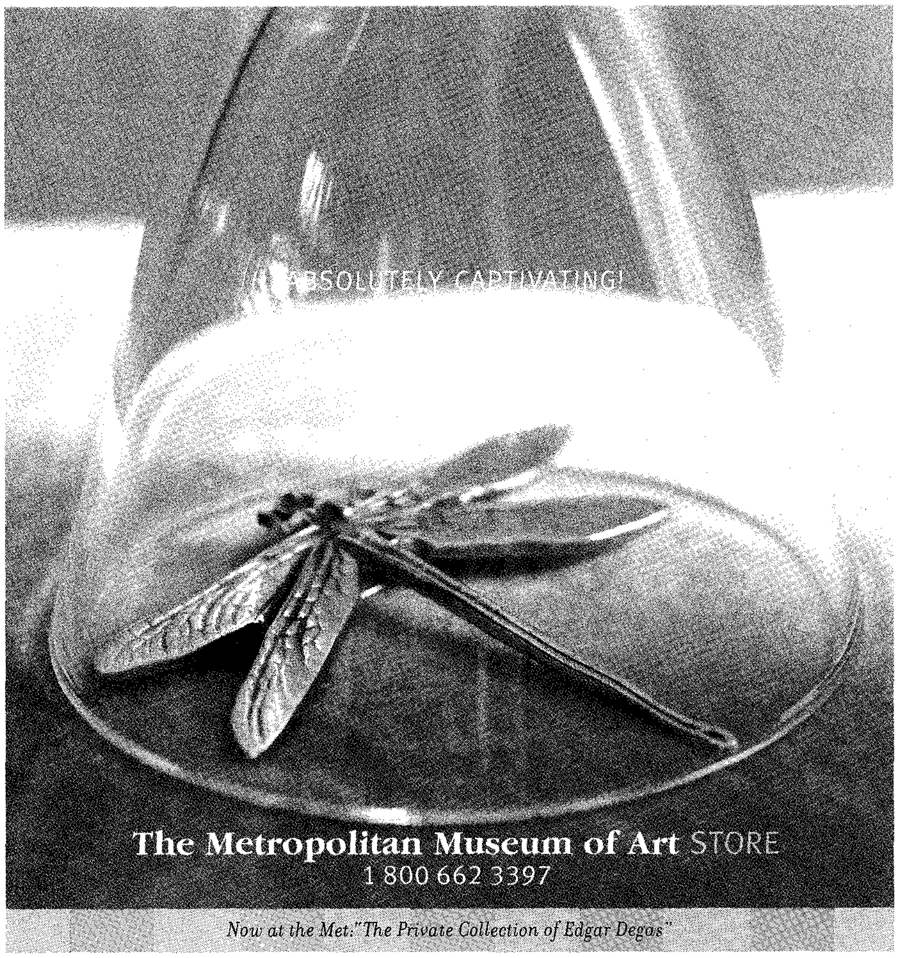
**FAST, CHEAP & OUT OF CONTROL**—Errol Morris, who specializes in unconventional ways of filming idiosyncratic subject matter ("The Thin Blue Line," "A Brief History of Time"), has made another unclassifiable documentary that leaves you hungry for more. This time around he focusses on four men who are obsessed with their work: a lion tamer, a topiary gardener, a mole-rat expert, and an M.I.T. robotics scientist. Morris's interviews with his eccentric but remarkably unkooky subjects are interwoven with stock footage, old movies, and cartoons—the result is an alternately comic and haunting meditation. Although the four men couldn't be more different in their personalities or interests, each possesses a purposeful vision of his own place in a vast and inscrutable universe. The musical score, by Caleb Sampson, is strikingly effective, and the last shot of George Mendonça, the topiarist, going out in a rainstorm with his shears to repair the damage done to his painstakingly shaped bears, giraffes, and elephants, is stunning in its affirmative power.—*D.M.* (Film Forum 3.)

**THE FULL MONTY**—An amiable light comedy, directed by Peter Cattaneo, about six unemployed British steelworkers who mount an all-male strip show for cash. The script, by Simon Beaufoy, is clean and well developed. Each character is given his bit to do, and when the motley crew comes together the actors all work wonderfully with one another, finding a sexy, warm performance rhythm as they gyrate to some classic seventies disco. Two actors—Mark Addy, who plays an overweight, insecure worker, and Robert Carlyle, as the ringleader—are sensational.—*Bruce Diones* (Angelika Film Center, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)

**GATTACA**—A quiet, down-to-earth science-fiction drama about a future in which genetically engineered people get all the great jobs. Ethan Hawke plays a genetically impefect young man who swaps his genetic code with the superior-gened Jude Law and tries to pass himself off as a member of the élite. The plot—a murder mystery that gives Hawke the chance to hold his own against the considerable charms of Uma Thurman—moves along predictably; apparently, it, too, has been engineered. What makes the film distinctive is writer-director Andrew Niccol's cold, Antonioni-like vision of the future. The severe architecture and the characters' alienating behavior create an unusual emotional distance, and that's a welcome change of pace from the overhyped, explosive future shocks of the past decade.—*B.D.* (86th Street East Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

**HAPPY TOGETHER**—Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Kar-Wai's latest effort—a Buenos Aires love story gone wrong starring two of Hong Kong's sexiest leading men, Tony Leung Chiu-Wai and Leslie Cheung Kwok-Wing—is an intoxicating blend of glossy nighttime visuals and loose melodramatic narrative that would give Douglas Sirk pause. While the chain-smoking lovers try to patch up their desperate, tormented relationship, the director uses devices (cutting from color to black-and-white, abrupt time shifts, sound collages) that turn the film into an intricate existential drama. Such poetic and elusive techniques seldom achieve an emotional response, but Wong's erotic style strands his troubled characters in a romantic cul-de-sac that allows their isolation to seem all the more heartbreaking. The film is a rare achievement—it's so drenched in melancholy it can make an audience swoon. In Cantonese and Mandarin.—*B.D.* (Cinema Village; through Nov. 6. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; starting Nov. 7.)

**HESTER STREET** (1975)—A modest comedy about the assimilation process among a group of Russian-Jewish immigrants living on the Lower East Side in 1896. Independently made, this first feature by the writer-director Joan Micklin Silver begins lamely, but it wins one over. Carol Kane is lovely as the timid,



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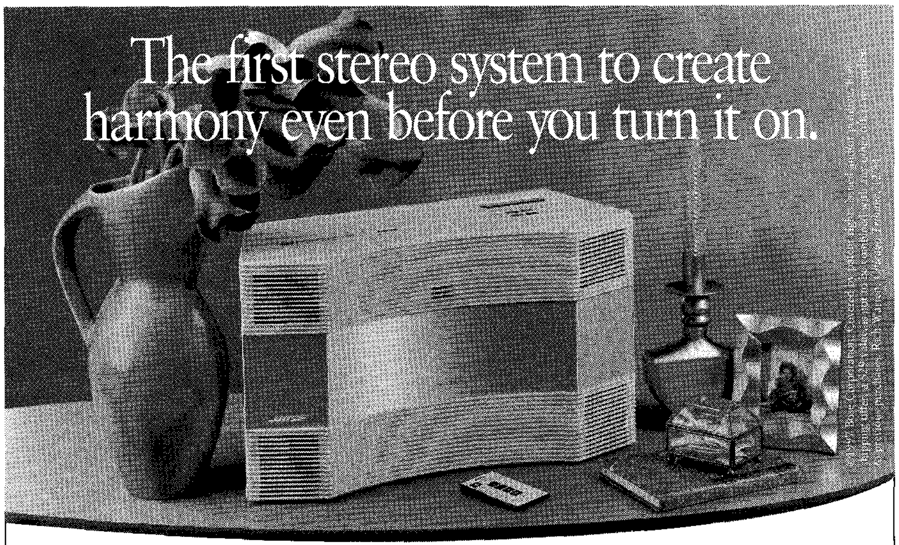

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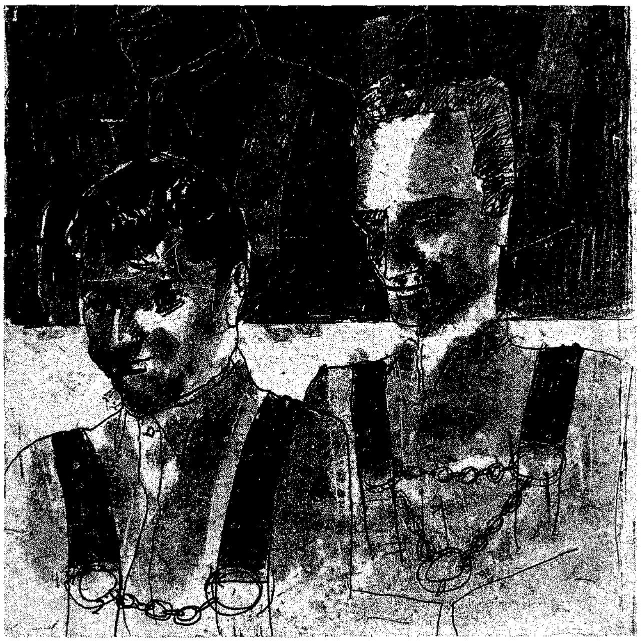
pious, rejected wife of a sweatshop worker (Steven Keats) who has broken away from the Old World traditions that she represents. Mel Howard plays Bernstein, the scholarly boarder who loves her. —*P.K.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Nov. 9.)

**The Ice Storm**—Ang Lee's treatment of Rick Moody's novel about suburban anomie is intelligent but curiously remote. Set in New Canaan, Connecticut, in 1973, it focusses on two troubled families, and it benefits from Lee's gently ironic touch: he's less interested in assigning blame for all the misery than in simply documenting the way it spreads and gets absorbed. With Kevin Kline, Joan Allen, Sigourney Weaver, and, among the adolescents, Elijah Wood and Christina Ricci.—*D.M.* (9/29/97) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



*At Film Forum 2, Robert Blake and Scott Wilson in Richard Brooks's "In Cold Blood."*

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

**In & Out**—Kevin Kline is an Indiana high-school teacher, Joan Cusack is his long-suffering fiancée, and Matt Dillon is a student turned movie star who wins the best-actor Oscar and tells a TV audience of millions that his former teacher is gay. Paul Rudnick's script deals in deliberate stereotypes, but at least it's high-spirited and appealingly humane. And the supporting cast (which includes Tom Selleck as a smarmy gay journalist and Bob Newhart as the school's flustered principal) has a lot of fun. Directed by Frank Oz.—*S.K.* (Chelsea West, Embassy 4, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

**It's a Gift** (1934)—A nightmare day in the life—or is it a day in a nightmare life?—and a milestone of comic misanthropy. W. C. Fields, playing a hapless New Jersey grocer, puts his distracted-oddball spin on a series of linked sketches about crabbed middle-aged resentments. They start with Fields trying to shave while his grown daughter hogs the bathroom mirror and end with him struggling to sleep on a rickety back-porch swing. Fields may not be what Thoreau had in mind, but in this film his uncanny combination of veiled energy and inertia turns the idea of "quiet desperation" into fertile ground for farce. Norman McLeod directed. Nine writers worked on the script; Fields had already used the core material for his 1926 silent, "It's the Old Army Game."—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 8-9.)

**Kiss the Girls**—We're in Hannibal Lecter land again, as sleuth Alex Cross (Morgan Freeman) goes after a psychopath who has just added Cross's niece to his collection of beautiful and defiant victims. One of them (Ashley Judd) manages to escape, thereby becoming the only link to the kidnappings. As a piece of suspense escapism, it's as smooth as they come, if a bit familiar, and Freeman has the screen presence to lend gravitas to the proceedings.—*D.M.* (10/13/97) (84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly.)

**L.A. Confidential**—Curtis Hanson's new thriller, set in Los Angeles in the early fifties, is about a group of cops who between them cover the full moral range, from the uptight integrity of Ed Exley (Guy Pearce) to the four-star sadism of Bud White (Russell Crowe). The plot, adapted from the James Ellroy novel, is both murky and tangled, yet the movie never bogs down. Hanson paces the tale with ease, decorating it with one neat performance after another: James Cromwell as the smiling police chief, David Strathairn as an oily pimp, Kim Basinger as one of his prize charges, and, better still, Kevin Spacey as a "celebrity crime-stopper" who gets dragged into the dark and dirty.—*Anthony Lane* (9/22/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

**A Life Less Ordinary**—A departure for director Danny Boyle, producer Andrew Macdonald, and writer John Hodge, the trio that created "Shallow Grave" and "Trainspotting": a film far more formless and scrappy than its predecessors, yet with a shimmer of liberation, a taste of pleasure, that one never really expected to see. Ewan McGregor plays a hapless janitor who, on the spur of a bad moment, kidnaps the daughter of his boss (Ian Holm); the hostage (Cameron Diaz) proves far too hot for him to handle. Diaz has pretty well everything in her grasp—McGregor, the plot, and the audience—and whenever the focus slides away from her your attention flags. As for the subplot about a pair of angels (Delroy Lindo and Holly Hunter) whose task it is to orchestrate the central romance, the less said the better. With Dan Hedaya and a stack of good songs.—*A.L.* (11/3/97) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas.)

**The Peacemaker**—In this fairly complicated but wholly unsurprising début from DreamWorks, a renegade Russian general has hijacked a batch of nuclear warheads, triggered one of them, and now plans to sell off the rest to the highest bidder. Time to send in the crack team of Colonel Tom Devoe (George Clooney) and Julia Kelly (Nicole Kidman), a warhead wonk. These two get on fine, but they're so damned busy saving civilization that they don't have time for even a snatched kiss. The movie loses shape as it goes along: Clooney carries on smiling, Kidman gives the world her most furious stare, and the sorrowful Marcel Iures, as a Bosnian extremist, walks calmly away with the picture. Directed by Mimi Leder.—*A.L.* (10/6/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, National Twin, and Village Theatre VII.)

**Seven Years in Tibet**—Brad Pitt (sporting platinum hair and an Austrian accent that fades in and out) plays Heinrich Harrer, the mountaineer upon whose memoirs the movie is loosely based. In the autumn of 1939, Harrer, known for his daring and his arrogance, sets out to climb one of the highest peaks in the Himalayas with a team led by his countryman Peter Aufschnaiter (David Thewlis). After his escape from a British P.O.W. camp in India and a gruelling two-year trek, he and Aufschnaiter arrive in Tibet, where Harrer is befriended by the young Dalai Lama and becomes his tutor in Western ways when he's not fixing things or holding Christmas soirées. Although the story revolves around the idea of Harrer's spiritual journey, we get bewilderingly little sense of any profound transformation in his character. Admittedly, the laconic screenplay doesn't offer much help (Harrer's first question upon meeting the Dalai Lama is "Do you like movies?"), but Pitt seems at a loss except when called upon to flirt or preen; he *is* great to look at, with his bronzed mien and Veronica Lake coiffure. Jean-Jacques Annaud directs with a fluid style, but the characters can't hold their own against the scenery, and after a while you feel like you're watching a well-made travelogue.—*D.M.* (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

**Sixteen Candles** (1984)—Samantha (Molly Ringwald), a high-school sophomore, is having the worst day of her life. When she goes to a school dance and longs to be noticed by a handsome senior (Michael Schoeffling), she's subjected to the humiliating attentions of a scrawny freshman (Anthony Michael Hall), who's known as Geek—a pesty, leering smart-

## THEATRE ADDRESSES

*(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)*

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St.
**Art Greenwich Twin,** Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
**Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at Broadway.
**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd St.
**Chelsea West,** 333 W. 23rd St.
**Cinema I,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema II,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema 3rd Avenue,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th St.
**Coronet Cinemas,** Third Ave. at 59th St.
**Criterion Center,** Broadway at 44th St.
**East 85th Street,** First Ave. at 85th St.
**Eastside Playhouse,** Third Ave. at 55th St.
**84th Street Sixplex,** Broadway at 84th St.
**86th Street East Twin,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**Embassy 1,** Broadway at 46th St.
**Embassy 2, 3, and 4,** Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th St.
**Film Forum,** W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
**First & 62nd Cinemas,** 400 E. 62nd St.
**Gotham Cinema,** Third Ave. at 58th St.
**Guild,** 33 W. 50th St.
**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
**Lincoln Square,** Broadway at 68th St.
**Metro Cinema 1 and 2,** Broadway at 99th St.
**Murray Hill Cinemas,** 160 E. 34th St.
**National Twin,** Broadway at 44th St.
**New York Twin,** Second Ave. at 67th St.
**19th Street East 6,** Broadway at 19th St.
**Olympia I and II,** Broadway at 107th St.
**Orpheum VII,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**Paris,** 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
**Park & 86th Street Cinemas,** 125 E. 86th St.
**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th St.
**Regency,** Broadway at 67th St.
**The Screening Room,** 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd St.
**64th and 2nd,** Second Ave. at 64th St.
**72nd Street East,** Third Ave. at 71st St.
**State,** Broadway at 45th St.
**Sutton 1 and 2,** Third Ave. at 57th St.
**34th Street Showplace,** 238 E. 34th St.
**Village East Cinemas,** Second Ave. at 12th St.
**Village Theatre VII,** Third Ave. at 11th St.
**Waverly 1 and 2,** Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
**Worldwide Cinemas,** 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th St.

mouth with braces on his teeth. Less raucous than the usual eighties pictures about teen-agers, this comedy by the writer-director John Hughes is closer in tone to the gentle English comedies of the forties and fifties. Ringwald has a lovely, offbeat candor, and Hall's Geek, with his pitchman's hard sell, is a truly weird creation.—*P.K.* (A Different Light Bookstore; Nov. 9.)

**Three Broadway Girls** (1932)—An enormously likable sophisticated comedy about three gold-diggers, played by Madge Evans, Joan Blondell, and the great sophisticate herself—Ina Claire. This is one of the few movies in which she was able to show some of the tricky high style that made her the most fashionable stage comedienne of her time. The three actresses play contrasting types: Evans is the elegant and tasteful one; Blondell is, of course, good-humored and wisecracking; and Claire is naughty and determined—she sets out to tantalize a man by going out in a fur coat with nothing worn under it. With David Manners, and Lowell Sherman, who also directed.—*P.K.* (Whitney Museum; Nov. 9 and Nov. 12-14.)

**Washington Square**—A new film version of the Henry James novel about a shy young woman (Jennifer Jason Leigh), her wealthy father (Albert Finney), and a gentleman caller (Ben Chaplin). Directed by Agnieszka Holland. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

## ALSO PLAYING

**BEAUMARCHAIS, THE SCOUNDREL:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **CAREER GIRLS** (reviewed in our issue of 8/11/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **CONSPIRACY THEORY** (8/18/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **COP LAND** (8/18/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE EDGE:** Criterion Center. . . . **EVENT HORIZON:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **EYE OF GOD:** Quad Cinema. . . . **THE GAME:** Embassy 3. . . . **GANG RELATED:** Criterion Center. . . . **GUMMO:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **THE HOUSE OF YES:** Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Regency. . . . **I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU NOT:** Sutton and Quad Cinema. . . . **IN SEARCH OF THE DREAM:** Chelsea Cinemas and Embassy 3. . . . **LILIES:** Quad Cinema. . . . **MIMIC:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MRS. BROWN** (8/4/97): The Screening Room and 62nd & Broadway. . . . **MOST WANTED:** Criterion Center. . . . **THE MYTH OF FINGERPRINTS:** The Screening Room. . . . **PLAYING GOD:** Gotham Cinema and Village East Cinemas. . . . **RED CORNER:** Art Greenwich Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Ziegfeld. . . . **SHALL WE DANCE?:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **SHE'S SO LOVELY** (9/8/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **SOUL FOOD:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, National Twin, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Waverly. . . . **SWITCHBACK:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 1, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **TELLING LIES IN AMERICA:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **TWILIGHT OF THE GOLDS:** Quad Cinema. . . . **U-TURN:** Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS:** Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, and 64th and 2nd. . . . **WISHMASTER:** Criterion Center. . . . **YEAR OF THE HORSE:** Village East Cinemas.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)*

**Film Forum 2,** W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Nov. 5-6: "The Amorous Adventures of Moll Flanders" (1965, Terence Young) and "Of Human Bondage" (1964, Ken Hughes and Henry Hathaway). . . . From Nov. 7: "In Cold Blood" (1967, Richard Brooks), with Robert Blake, Scott Wilson, and John Forsythe.

**Museum of Modern Art,** Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of new films from Germany; most in German, with English subtitles. Nov. 6 at 2:30 and Nov. 8 at 5: "My Heart Is Mine Alone!" (Helma Sanders-Brahms). . . . Nov. 6 at 6 and Nov. 8 at 2: "Gesche's Poison" (Walburg von Waldenfels). . . . Nov. 7 at 2:30 and Nov. 9 at 5: "Three Days in April" (Oliver Storz). . . . Nov. 7 at 6 and Nov. 10 at 2:30: "Beyond Silence" (Caroline Link). . . . Nov. 9 at 2: "Obsession" (Peter Sehr). . . . Nov. 10 at 6: "14 Days to Life" (Roland Suso Richter). . . . Nov. 11 at 1: "Exile Shanghai" (Ulrike Ottinger; in English, German, and Mandarin). . . . Nov. 11 at 6: "Hotel Morgana" (Martin Hansen). . . . ¶ Nov. 6 at 6:30: "Dreams and Wise Words from the Tzotzil and Tzeltal Communities" (1995, Carlos Martínez Suárez; in Spanish and Mayan dialects). . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 3: "Displaced People" (1997, Martínez Suárez; in Spanish and Mayan dialects). . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 6: "Conditional Love" (1997, Ardele Lister). . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 8:15: "His Girl Friday" (1940, Howard Hawks). . . . ¶ Nov. 7 at 8:15, Nov. 8 at 2:30 and 5, and Nov. 9 at 2:30: Programs of American avant-garde films. . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 6:30: Films by Abigail Child, who will be present.

**Walter Reade Theatre,** Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films directed by Andrei Konchalovsky; in Russian, with English subtitles. Nov. 5 at 2 and 6:15: "Asya's Happiness" (1967). . . . Nov. 5 at 4 and 8:15: "The First Teacher" (1965). . . . Nov. 6 at 2, Nov. 7 at 4:15 and 8:40, and Nov. 8 at 6:15: "A Nest of Gentlefolk" (1969). . . . Nov. 6 at 4:15, Nov. 7 at 2 and 6:30, and Nov. 8 at 4 and 8:30: "Uncle Vanya" (1970). . . . Nov. 9 at 4, Nov. 10 at 1 and 6:15, and Nov. 11 at 1: "Siberiade" (1978). . . . ¶ Nov. 8-9 at 2: "It's a Gift" (†).

**American Museum of the Moving Image,** 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Nov. 8 at 2: "The Front" (1976, Martin Ritt). . . . Nov. 8 at 4:30: "Body and Soul" (1947, Robert Rossen). . . . Nov. 9 at 2: "The Plot Against Harry" (1989, Michael Roemer). . . . Nov. 9 at 3:30: "Bye Bye Braverman" (1968, Sidney Lumet). . . . Nov. 9 at 5:40: "Hester Street" (†).

**Symphony Space,** Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Nov. 11 at 7: "The Last Métro" (1980, François Truffaut; in French). . . . Nov. 11 at 9:30: "Man Hunt" (1941, Fritz Lang).

**From Paris to Hollywood**—The Alliance Française presents a series of French films (shown in Florence Gould Hall) alongside the American films based on them (shown in Tinker Auditorium). Nov. 11 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Le Miroir à Deux Faces" (1958, André Cayatte). . . . Nov. 11 at 6:15 and 8:45: "The Mirror Has Two Faces" (1996, Barbra Streisand). (Both at 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160.)

**Whitney Museum,** Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Nov. 5 at noon and Nov. 6 at 6:15: "Nanook of the North" (1922, Robert Flaherty; silent). . . . Nov. 5-6 at 2: "Blood and Sand" (1922, Fred Niblo; silent). . . . Nov. 5-6 at 4: "The Cheat" (1915, Cecil B. De Mille; silent). . . . Nov. 7-8 at 11:30: "Irene" (1926, Alfred E. Green). . . . Nov. 7-8 at 2: "Flesh and the Devil" (1927, Clarence Brown; silent). . . . Nov. 7-8 at 4:30: "Our Modern Maidens" (1929, Jack Conway). . . . Nov. 9, Nov. 12, and Nov. 14 at 11:30 and Nov. 13 at 6:15: "Blonde Venus" (1932, Josef von Sternberg). . . . Nov. 9 and Nov. 12-14 at 1:30: "Three Broadway Girls" (†). . . . Nov. 9 and Nov. 12-14 at 3:30: "Fashions of 1934" (†).

**A Different Light Bookstore,** 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Nov. 9 at 7, the feature will be "Sixteen Candles" (†).

**Museum of Television and Radio,** 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Nov. 30: "That Certain Summer" (1972, Lamont Johnson), with Hal Holbrook, Martin Sheen, and Hope Lange. (Showings Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2 and 4; and Thursdays and Fridays at 2, 4, and 6.)

**Lincoln Square,** Broadway at 68th St. (336-7669)—The First Annual Shorts International Film Festival will be held Nov. 5-6, from 11 to 11.

**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th St.—Nov. 7-13: The 11th New York Experimental Lesbian & Gay Film/Video Festival. (For information about screenings and tickets, call 571-4242.)

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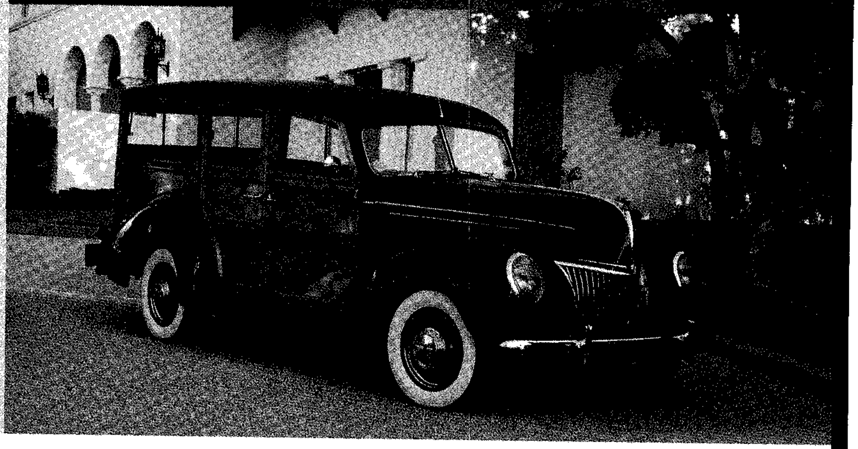

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THE NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## DEPARTMENT OF JITTERS

*How the crash that wasn't looked from Fort Lee, New Jersey.*

IN reporting about stock-market crashes, there is a ritual that is adhered to by all but a few oddballs and recalcitrants. Step 1: Rush down to the Members' Gallery of the New York Stock Exchange and watch a bunch of graying, out-of-shape men shouting and waving their hands. Step 2: Go outside and hang around in the cold (for some reason, it is always cold during market plunges) to interview a couple of these future cardiac cases when they take a cigarette break. Step 3: Walk a few blocks south to Harry's at Hanover Square and find a stockbroker who is contemplating jumping out of a skyscraper window. (This is not as easy as it sounds. Many brokers work on commission and make out better than usual during the heavy trading that accompanies big falls in the Dow Jones averages.)

Ten years ago, when the stock market tumbled twenty-two per cent on Black Monday, I followed the reporter's ritual. Last Monday, when the Dow dropped seven per cent, I stayed at home and watched CNBC, which proved far more informative. The Fort Lee-based business-news outfit has gradually inserted itself into the central nervous system of the American financial community. Its regular audience is only about two hundred thousand, but this includes tens of thousands of small investors, mutual-fund managers, and Wall Street professionals. When news is broken on CNBC, it moves the markets. During last week's turmoil, the audience swelled to a million, and CNBC's guests included Richard Grasso, the chairman of the New York Stock Exchange; Alan (Ace) Greenberg, the chairman of Bear Stearns; and Peter Lynch, the vice-chairman of Fidelity Investments.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

It is easy to see why businesspeople are partial to CNBC, a General Electric subsidiary. Unlike most news organizations, it makes little attempt to be a neutral observer and instead covers the market in the same way that newspapers cover local sports teams. Last Monday, the pain was etched in the faces of CNBC's reporters. The following morning, when the home team resurrected itself, the relief was equally plain. "It's great to see all the arrows pointing up," gushed Susie Gharib, an anchorwoman who treats the market's lapses rather the way a dedicated schoolteacher scolds her beloved but occasionally wayward pupils.

Strangely, the network's "star" was nowhere to be seen during the big slide. Maria Bartiromo, who usually reports from the floor of the stock exchange, was preparing for her new evening show, "Business Center," which airs opposite CNN's "Moneyline." The New York *Post* has labelled Bartiromo "the Money Honey," which is sexist but understandable, since CNBC uses shots of her eyes, lips, and legs in its ads. Whether the viewers missed her presence is unclear, but the *Post's* editors did. The morning after the drop, they ran the headline "MISSING 'MONEY HONEY' MADE NEWS MORE BITTER."

Late last week, on a visit to CNBC's newsroom, I ran into Ron Insana, a fast-talking anchorman who worked for sixteen hours last Monday, when CNBC extended its coverage through the night to keep up with the Asian markets. Insana is a short, rotund fellow, and, with his makeup and pasted-down black hair, he looked like a cross between George Costanza and Count Dracula. The market was relatively calm on this particular morning, but he wasn't.

"Asia's down. Latin America's down. Brazil has allowed two banks to be taken over by foreign firms. It's a backdoor bailout. There are rumors about our big banks' exposure." His staccato delivery reminded me of a ticker tape. I asked if it had been difficult to remain on the air for so long during the global sell-off. "In the old days"—before the Financial News Network was acquired by CNBC—"we'd be on for six hours at a time with nothing happening, bullshitting," he said. "Back then, it was total ad-libbing."

Nowadays, CNBC has bureaus in London, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. "We caught on to a Gulf War that's going to last forever. An event like this happens and Ron Insana becomes Norman Schwarzkopf," declared CNBC's president, Bill Bolster, a beefy and voluble Iowan who keeps two packs of Merits on his desk and mixes hyperbole with business-school jargon. Bolster said that Jack Welch, G.E.'s chairman, had called to congratulate him on CNBC's performance. "We had a chance to define our brand, and we took it," he added. I asked whether CNBC was cheerleading for the stock market during last week's crisis. "That is an observation that I am very comfortable with," he said.

—JOHN CASSIDY

## RAG TRADE

*A model, an agent, and a love-fuelled lawsuit.*

Amy Wesson, the model, turned an unlit cigarette over in her fingers as she waited for her gnocchi at Da Silvano recently. "Can I smoke in here?" she said, sounding as if she knew she couldn't but was hoping for a magical permission anyway. "I don't want to get in trouble." Wesson's caution about the illegal ingestion of any substance is probably well placed, since she is being sued for breach of contract by her former agency, Company Management, which alleges that the twenty-year-old model spent much of the spring too strung out on drugs to work, and resisted rehab. The ten-million-dollar suit was filed in June, though the news of it didn't break until Wesson, who is that wan-looking blonde with the wide-set blue eyes and the humorless mouth in recent Versace ads, abandoned Company last month in favor of a new agency, Marilyn, Inc.

Michael Flutie, the president of Company, said that calling Wesson on her suspected drug use was a "tough love" tactic, consistent with a newfound sense of responsibility toward minors in the modelling business. Earlier this year, after President Clinton denounced the "heroin chic" look, Flutie gathered a group of fashion-industry leaders to such venues as Il Cantinori and Balthazar to discuss the problem. Among the issues on the agenda was whether agents should make a pact agreeing not to sign up drug-using models who might try to cut loose from other agents who were pressuring them into rehab. Flutie urged his fellow-agents to confront models they suspected of drug use. "It's like a parent who stands in front of a son or daughter and says, 'This is the kind of love I can give you, and you cannot live in my house if you are going to do this,'" he said. He neglected to add the hypothetical parent's clincher, however: "*And if you do leave, I'm going to sue you.*"

Wesson doesn't buy the tough-love line. Flutie, she said, "has never come up to me saying, 'O.K., Amy, you are partying too much.' He would never even care, as long as he was getting his money." (Wesson earns up to twenty-five thousand dollars a day.) She denies all the drug allegations and says the lawsuit is motivated by "bitterness, vindictiveness," adding, "I don't have a problem with drugs. I never have. And I never will. It's just not my thing, basically."

Her thing is her career, basically, which means that, since Wesson has provided the visuals for a slew of heroin-chic stories, her image is in need of serious rehab. An allegation that she once had to be propped up in front of the camera is wildly misleading, she explained. "I had a kidney infection, but I still worked until twelve that night, with a rope tied around my waist—they were jerking me into weird positions. I felt really faint for a second, and they were like, 'Go and sit down.' And Polly Mellen"—the stylist—"took me and laid me down on the couch and she gave me this, like, Helmut Lang puffy wrap coat, and it folded out into a little blanket. And they woke me up in two hours, and I got up."

After three months off—spent learning Tai Chi in Jamaica—Wesson is again ready to be jerked around for a living. She is looking at the bright side of being sued. "All this press, whether it is good talk or bad talk—everyone knows my name now in Middle America," she said, with the unconvincing nonchalance of youth.

Meanwhile, Flutie's save-the-young-models campaign has borne results: a voluntary code of conduct for agencies is imminent, and the Council of Fashion Designers of America will be sending a letter to the designers whose shows it is hosting this week, reminding them, as they pop their champagne corks backstage, that alcohol should not be served to minors.

—Rebecca Mead

## THE BOARDS

*Need lyrics for your Broadway hit? There is nothing like this dame.*

In the musical's heyday, Betty Comden, Caroline Lee, and Dorothy Fields were among the few female lyricists who found their way onto Broadway marquees. These days, one of the best practitioners of the mischievous, meticulous craft is Susan Birkenhead. The frizzy-haired, fiftyish lyricist has two Broadway shows this year, "Triumph of Love," which opened last month, and "High Society." Based on Cole Porter's score for the film, "High Society" recently opened in San Francisco to reviews that praised Porter for the brilliant opening, which Birkenhead had in fact written.

Birkenhead began as an actress, and she sees songwriting "very much like an acting exercise." She says, "I close my eyes and try to imagine what is the next lyrical sound out of this character's mouth." The result is always smart. "If the lyric has raw emotion in it, then there's a very sophisticated thought process," says the director George C. Wolfe, who worked with Birkenhead on "Jelly's Last Jam." "It becomes this actable thing." He adds, "She does dirty lyrics brilliantly, too."

Birkenhead is nervous by nature; she's also a bit of a fusspot when it comes to her words. She watches over them like a Border collie over sheep. The whole business of riding herd on vowel sounds, consonants, and how the word sits on the note requires talent and a little luck. In this department, she comes well prepared. During technical rehearsals for "Triumph," she was wearing her lucky white bra and a poppy brooch given to her by the show's producer.

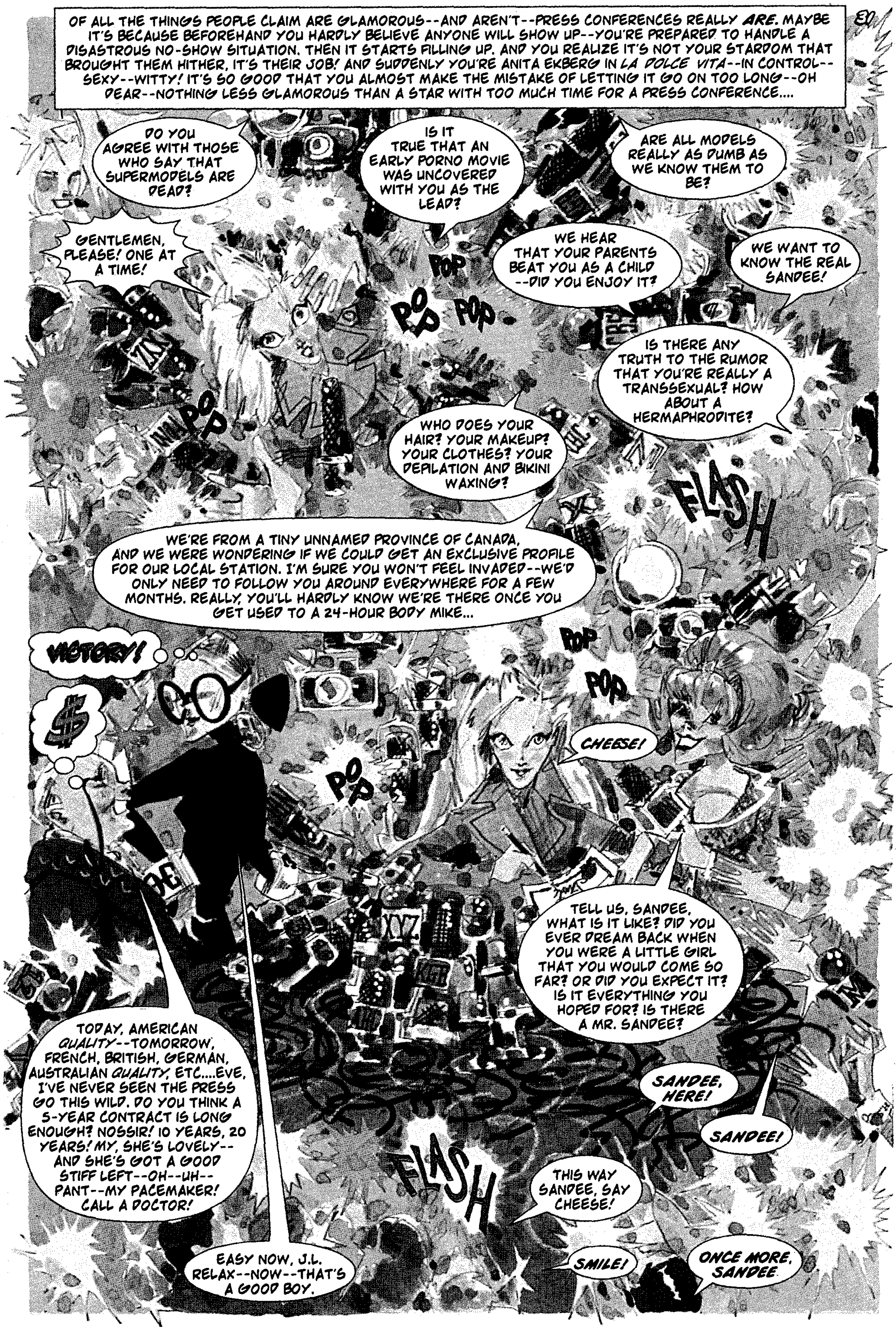
Slumped over a table at rehearsal, Birkenhead was punching up a comedy number. "It's a vaudeville thing," she said. Already today she had discarded "Who got Dionysus / Through every drunken crisis?" She explained, "I don't think enough people know who Dionysus is," then floated her newest lines:

Who told Nefertiti
"Your profile's better, Sweetie"?

"I'm trying to marry elegance and vulgarity in a graceful way," she said. She picked up "The New Comprehensive American Rhyming Dictionary," a well-thumbed paperback. "This is my secret," she said. "Sondheim will tell you different. But he's wrong." —John Lahr

## HAUTE CARTOON

*Isaac Mizrahi talked a blue streak through the 1995 documentary "Unzipped." Now we learn that he writes the way he talks. The fashion designer's literary début, the comic-book opus "The Adventures of Sandee the Supermodel; or, Yvesaac's Model Diaries" (Simon & Schuster), features the splashy, sly illustrations of William Frawley, but the pages are often so crowded with words that there's not much room for pictures. The effect is as evanescent as a trip down the runway, where, according to Yvesaac/Isaac, the trick is "not to take this thing that you're obsessed with too seriously or in too large a dose."*


OF ALL THE THINGS PEOPLE CLAIM ARE GLAMOROUS--AND AREN'T--PRESS CONFERENCES REALLY *ARE*. MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE BEFOREHAND YOU HARDLY BELIEVE ANYONE WILL SHOW UP--YOU'RE PREPARED TO HANDLE A DISASTROUS NO-SHOW SITUATION. THEN IT STARTS FILLING UP. AND YOU REALIZE IT'S NOT YOUR STARDOM THAT BROUGHT THEM HITHER, IT'S THEIR JOB! AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE ANITA EKBERG IN *LA DOLCE VITA*--IN CONTROL--SEXY--WITTY! IT'S SO GOOD THAT YOU ALMOST MAKE THE MISTAKE OF LETTING IT GO ON TOO LONG--OH DEAR--NOTHING LESS GLAMOROUS THAN A STAR WITH TOO MUCH TIME FOR A PRESS CONFERENCE....
DO YOU AGREE WITH THOSE WHO SAY THAT SUPERMODELS ARE DEAD?
IS IT TRUE THAT AN EARLY PORNO MOVIE WAS UNCOVERED WITH YOU AS THE LEAD?
ARE ALL MODELS REALLY AS DUMB AS WE KNOW THEM TO BE?
GENTLEMEN, PLEASE! ONE AT A TIME!
POP
WE HEAR THAT YOUR PARENTS BEAT YOU AS A CHILD --DID YOU ENJOY IT?
WE WANT TO KNOW THE REAL SANDEE!
POP POP
IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMOR THAT YOU'RE REALLY A TRANSSEXUAL? HOW ABOUT A HERMAPHRODITE?
POP
WHO DOES YOUR HAIR? YOUR MAKEUP? YOUR CLOTHES? YOUR DEPILATION AND BIKINI WAXING?
FLASH
WE'RE FROM A TINY UNNAMED PROVINCE OF CANADA, AND WE WERE WONDERING IF WE COULD GET AN EXCLUSIVE PROFILE FOR OUR LOCAL STATION. I'M SURE YOU WON'T FEEL INVADED--WE'D ONLY NEED TO FOLLOW YOU AROUND EVERYWHERE FOR A FEW MONTHS. REALLY, YOU'LL HARDLY KNOW WE'RE THERE ONCE YOU GET USED TO A 24-HOUR BODY MIKE...
VICTORY!
$
POP
POP
CHEESE!
POP
TELL US, SANDEE, WHAT IS IT LIKE? DID YOU EVER DREAM BACK WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE GIRL THAT YOU WOULD COME SO FAR? OR DID YOU EXPECT IT? IS IT EVERYTHING YOU HOPED FOR? IS THERE A MR. SANDEE?
TODAY, AMERICAN *QUALITY*--TOMORROW, FRENCH, BRITISH, GERMAN, AUSTRALIAN *QUALITY*, ETC....EVE, I'VE NEVER SEEN THE PRESS GO THIS WILD. DO YOU THINK A 5-YEAR CONTRACT IS LONG ENOUGH? NOSSIR! 10 YEARS, 20 YEARS! MY, SHE'S LOVELY--AND SHE'S GOT A GOOD STIFF LEFT--OH--UH--PANT--MY PACEMAKER! CALL A DOCTOR!
SANDEE, HERE!
SANDEE!
FLASH
THIS WAY SANDEE, SAY CHEESE!
EASY NOW, J.L. RELAX--NOW--THAT'S A GOOD BOY.
SMILE!
ONCE MORE, SANDEE.

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

# REAL PEOPLE

*Why should playwrights go to the trouble of inventing stories when they can recycle celebrity lives?*

BY KURT ANDERSEN

When E. L. Doctorow's "Ragtime" was published, in 1975, it incited months of "Whither fiction?" chatter. The novel used well-known historical figures as characters—a device that, at the time, passed for formal innovation. This recombinant literary DNA, a conversation piece twenty-two years ago, is now so pervasive that we hardly notice it. Today's serious-fiction best-sellers brim with real celebrities—Frank Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, and Lenny Bruce in Don DeLillo's "Underworld," for instance. In the movies, biographical portraits are flourishing, in two flavors: flamboyant sinners ("The People vs. Larry Flynt," Howard Stern's "Private Parts") and living saints (the Dalai Lama is the subject of two bio-pics).

JACK ZIEGLER

No medium, however, has become infatuated by real people so suddenly and so thoroughly as the theatre. Shakespeare wrote his histories, and New York seasons have always had a new biographical show or two: Julie Harris as Emily Dickinson, Hal Holbrook doing Mark Twain, or, back when there were beloved politicians, a hagiography of a beloved politician—"Sunrise at Campobello," in the fifties; "Fiorello!," in the sixties; "Golda," in the seventies.

But lately it has become a craze, with ten or twelve a year—so many that by now there are overflowing subgenres. The categories include Giants of the Turn of the Century ("Camping with Henry and Tom," about Ford and Edison; Steve Martin's "Picasso at the Lapin Agile," co-starring Einstein); Queens of the Mid-Century Manhattan Beau Monde ("Tru," "Master Class," and "Full Gallop," about Capote, Callas, and Vreeland); Sexual Freaks in London ("Stanley," about the erotomaniacal painter Stanley Spencer); and, hybrid of hybrids, Freakish Sex Queens of the Turn-of-the-Century London Beau Monde, featuring "Vita and Virginia," about Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf; "Gross Indecency," based on Oscar Wilde's sodomy trials; and David Hare's forthcoming "The Judas Kiss," also about Wilde.

This week, "Defying Gravity," a play about the Challenger disaster, opens. Next week, it's "Jackie," a show about Mrs. Onassis, followed by a Broadway revival of "The Diary of Anne Frank" and a musical version of Doctorow's "Ragtime."

The glut represents the convergence of several long-running cultural trends. In the first place, one-person plays are cheap to produce. Then, there's simple celebrity obsession—the same Zeitgeist that propels *People* drove the eighties book-publishing fad for biographies and now gives theatre audiences an unembarrassed taste for shows about Patsy Cline and John Barrymore. It's also a late-stage postmodern crossbreeding of reality and entertainment: from Warhol's Brillo boxes, Tom Wolfe's novelized journalism, and agitprop plays like "The Chicago Conspiracy Trial"—artifact plus production value equals art—to "The World's Deadliest Swarms," Court TV, "Pop-Up Video," and CNN's special theme music for its Diana-death coverage. With nonfiction being produced and consumed as entertainment, the theatre is reciprocating. Contemporary audiences, conditioned by the hyperrealism of movies and TV, do not easily suspend disbelief when presented with the stylized unreality of live theatre. Playwrights and producers now end-run that problem: instead of suspending disbelief, these shows use "real" characters to fortify belief.

"The Capeman," Paul Simon's imminent Broadway musical, is about a real Puerto Rican teen-ager who stabbed two white kids to death on Manhattan's West Side in 1959, two years into the original Broadway run of "West Side Story." It may be the first instance of Broadway imitating life imitating Broadway imitating life. By the time "Capeman" opens, in December, we will have read and heard a great deal about the actual killer and victims. In this Oliver Stone age, the historical-accuracy debate has itself become a P.R. tactic, a form of pre-marketing. "Not everything in the play happened," Simon said at a recent private performance of songs from his show, "but it is more or less true. I remember the story from when it happened, but I can't remember exactly what I remember."

For the last couple of decades, almost every creative field has seemed to be locked in a cul-de-sac, compulsively recycling past glories, and biographical plays are of a piece with this chronic retromania. For a producer, a show about a real person is tempting as a trick of oxymoronic alchemy—a play with the sentimental familiarity of a revival *and* the virgin excitement of the never before seen. The main character is a pre-sold brand. (The same strange dynamic is what has just turned the rejiggered "Candle in the Wind" into the best-selling single of all time.) "There's a hole," says one well-known impresario who has worked on biographical shows. "People writing truly original stuff—those people just aren't writing plays anymore." The director Gregory Mosher says, "It's a tremendous problem to write a new story. Writers sit down and say, 'Nope—that's already been done.'"

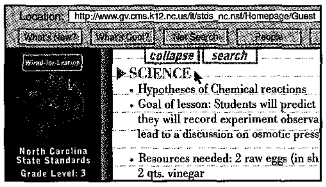
Of course, as a replacement for make-believe, biography is apt to be a short-lived gambit. In the book business, straight biography, after its run in the eighties, is pretty much tapped out commercially. "It's a hard category," one leading literary agent told me. "Seven, eight, even five years ago, it was different. But we've run out of interesting people." ♦

# She already knew he needed two eggs and some vinegar for his science project.

# But now, she also knows why.

## IBM's Reinventing Education Partnerships

Parents in Charlotte, North Carolina now have an uncanny ability to understand exactly what their kids are learning. They're using a specially designed Web site that lets them get involved with class projects, track their children's progress, even find out what's on the lunch menu.



http://www.gv.cms.k12.nc.us/it/stds_nc.nsf/Homepage/Guest

North Carolina State Standards
Grade Level: 3

SCIENCE
- Hypotheses of Chemical reactions
- Goal of lesson: Students will predict they will record experiment observa lead to a discussion on osmotic press
- Resources needed: 2 raw eggs (in sh 2 qts. vinegar

By creating this Web site and allowing parents to access it from their homes, local libraries or community centers, IBM's Reinventing Education Partnership gives parents the ability to work with teachers to improve student achievement.

The project, called "Wired For Learning," was developed by a dedicated team of IBM researchers who worked with teachers, parents and students in Charlotte to create an interactive bridge between home and school.

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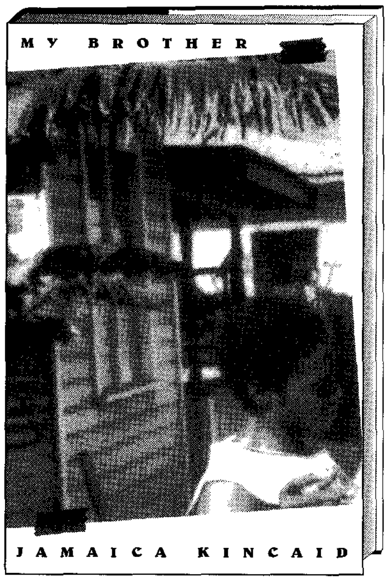
*I became a writer out of desperation, so when I first heard my brother was dying I was familiar with the act of saving myself: I would write about him.**



MY BROTHER
by
JAMAICA KINCAID

1997 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST

"RICH, COMPLEX."
—Anna Quindlen
*The New York Times Book Review*

"[KINCAID'S] WORDS ARE NOT EASILY FORGOTTEN. THEY SEAR THE MIND."
—Elizabeth Manus
*The Boston Phoenix Literary Supplement*

*FROM MY BROTHER

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

PERSONAL HISTORY

# COP DIARY

*Anything can happen when you walk a beat. But even with the brawls, rapes, and hits it still has a way of feeling like a neighborhood.*

BY MARCUS LAFFEY

OVER the past year, more than a hundred people have worn my handcuffs. Not long ago, in a self-defense class, I wore them myself. There was a jolt of dissonance, like the perverse unfamiliarity at hearing your own voice on tape. Is this me? They were cold, and the metal edge pressed keenly against the bone if I moved, even when they were loose. The catch of the steel teeth as the cuffs tighten is austere and final, and never so much so as when it emanates from the small of your back. I thought, Hey, these things work. And then, Good thing. Because their intransigent grip means that, once they're on the correct pair of hands, no one should get hurt. Barring an unexpected kick or a bite, the story's over: no one's going to lose any teeth or blood, we're both going safely to jail, and at least one of us is going home tonight.

The handcuffs are a tool of the trade and an emblem of it, as are the gun and the nightstick. People—especially children whose eye level is at my equipment belt—stare at them, sometimes with a fearful look, but more often with fascination. Since I hold them from the other end, I regard them differently, just as surgeons don't feel uneasy, as I do, at the sight of a scalpel or a syringe. Police work can look ugly, especially when it's done well: you might see a man walking down the street, untroubled, untroubling, when two or ten cops rush up to him, shouting over sirens and screeching tires, with their guns drawn. You haven't seen the old man rocking on a stoop three blocks away with one eye swollen shut. You haven't heard his story, his description of the man being handcuffed: coat, color, height, the tattoo on his wrist.

The transformation from citizen to prisoner is terrible to behold, regardless of its justice. Unlike my sister the teacher or my brother the lawyer, I take prisoners, and to exercise that authority is to invoke a profound social trust. Each time a surgeon undertakes the responsibility of cutting open a human being, it should be awesome and new, no matter how necessary the operation, no matter how routine. A police officer who takes away someone's freedom bears a burden of at least equal gravity. Let me tell you, it's a pleasure sometimes.

I WALK a beat in a neighborhood of New York City that is a byword for slum. Even if the reality of places like the South Bronx, Brownsville, and Bed-Stuy no longer matches the reputation, and maybe never did, these bad neighborhoods are still bad. Children still walk through three different brands of crack vials in the building lobbies. People still shit in the stairwells. Gunshots in the night may have become less common in my precinct, but many people, young and old, can still distinguish that hard, sharp crack—like a broomstick snapped cleanly in half—from fireworks or a car backfiring.

The genuine surprise is how wholesome and ordinary this neighborhood sometimes seems, with its daily round of parents' getting kids ready for school, going to work, wondering if a car or a coat will make it through another winter. Life in the projects and the tenements can be just the way it is in suburbia, except that it takes place on busier streets and in smaller rooms. Sometimes it's better, in the way that city life, when it's good, is better than life anywhere else. In the summer, you can walk through the projects beneath shady aisles of sycamore and maple, past well-tended gardens and playgrounds teeming with children. There will be families having cookouts, old ladies reading Bibles on the benches, pensive pairs of men playing chess. Once, I went to the roof of a project and saw a hawk perched on the rail. Always, you can see Manhattan in the near distance, its towers and spires studded with lights, stately and slapdash, like the crazy geometry of rock crystal. There are many days when I feel sorry for people who work indoors.

The other revelation when I became a cop was how much people *like* cops. In safe neighborhoods, a cop is part of the scenery. I used to notice cops the way I noticed mailboxes, which is to say only when I needed one. But in bad neighborhoods I notice people noticing me, and especially certain classes of people—older people, young kids, single women, people dressed for work or church. They look at me with positive appreciation and relief. I am proof that tonight, on this walk home, no one's going to start with them. Sometimes they express that appreciation. The exceptions are groups of young guys on the street (older, if they're unemployed). Sometimes they're just hanging out, sometimes they're planning something more ambitious, and you're a sign that this wild night's not going to happen—not as they hoped, not here. Sometimes they express themselves, too.

*Nothing has as strong an effect on a cop as the word "gun"—guns can turn nobodies and wanna-bes into bad men in an instant.*

KAREN YAMA/MOMENTA ART

When I'm working, I wear a Kevlar vest, and I carry a nightstick, pepper spray, a radio, a flashlight, two sets of handcuffs, and a gun with two extra fifteen-round magazines. A thick, leather-bound memo book has been squeezed into my back pocket, and leather gloves, rubber gloves, department forms, and binoculars are stuffed in various other pockets. When you chase someone in this outfit, it's like running in a suit of armor while carrying a bag of groceries. But I'm safe, and it's only very rarely that I feel otherwise. All the people I've fought with were trying to get away.

I walk around on patrol, keeping an eye out and talking to people, until a job comes up on the radio. The radio is constant and chaotic, a montage of stray details, awful and comic facts:

"Respond to a woman cornered by a large rodent in her living room."

". . . supposed to be a one-year-old baby with its head split open."

"The perp is a male Hispanic, white T-shirt, bluejeans, possible mustache, repeat, possible mustache."

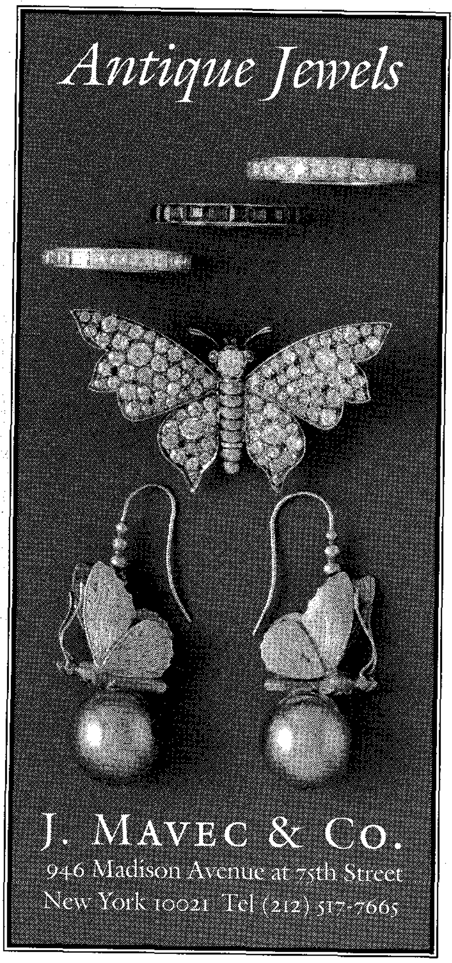
The appeal of patrol is its spontaneity and variety, its responsiveness to the rhythms of the street: there will be long lulls and then sudden convulsions as pickup jobs and radio runs propel you into a foot pursuit, a dispute, or a birth. When the action's over, the world can seem slow and small, drearily confined. And then you have to do the paperwork.

WHEN you arrest someone, it's like a blind date. You spend a few hours with a stranger, a few feet apart, saying "Tell me about yourself." You ask, "How much do you weigh?" and "Are you a gang member? Really! Which one?" And you hold hands, for a few minutes, as you take prints—each fingertip individually, then four fingers together, flat, and the thumb, flat, at the bottom of the card. A lot of people try to help you by rolling the fingers themselves, which usually smudges the print; sometimes that's their intent. Crackheads often don't have usable prints: their fingers are burned smooth from the red-hot glass pipe. Junkies, as they're coming down, can go into a whole-body cramp, and have hands as stiff as lobster claws. Perps collared for robbery or assault may have bruised, swollen, or bloody fingers. You try to be gentle, and you wear latex gloves.

When you print a perp, you're close to him, and because you're close you're vulnerable. You take off the cuffs and put your gun in a locker. Once, I was printing a guy as he found out he was not getting a summons but, instead, going through the system. He became enraged at the desk sergeant, screaming curses and threats, and I wondered if he'd make a run at him or, worse, at me. But I was holding his hands and could feel that they were as limp and loose as if he lay in a hot bath—as if his body were indifferent to the hatred in his voice. So I went on printing as he went on shouting, each of us concentrating on the task at hand.

THE paperwork involved in policing is famously wasteful or is a necessary evil, sometimes both. Often, it reaches a nuanced complexity that is itself somehow sublime, like a martial art. If, for example, you arrested a man for hitting his girlfriend with a tire iron and then found a crack vial in his pocket, the paperwork would include a Domestic Incident Report (for follow-up visits by the domestic-violence officer); a 61, or complaint, which describes the offense, the perp, and the victim; and an aided card, which contains information on the victim and what medical attention she received. The 61 and the aided are assigned numbers from the Complaint Index and the Aided and Accident Index. The aided number goes on the 61, and both the complaint and the aided numbers go on the On-Line Booking Sheet. The O.L.B.S. provides more detailed information on the perp; it has to be handwritten, and then entered into the computer, which in turn generates an arrest number.

You would also have to type two vouchers—both of which have serial numbers that must be entered on the 61 and on the O.L.B.S.—for the tire iron and the crack vial; affix a lead seal to the tire iron; and put the crack vial in a narcotics envelope in the presence of the desk officer, writing your name, your shield number, and the date across the seal. You also fill out a Request for Lab



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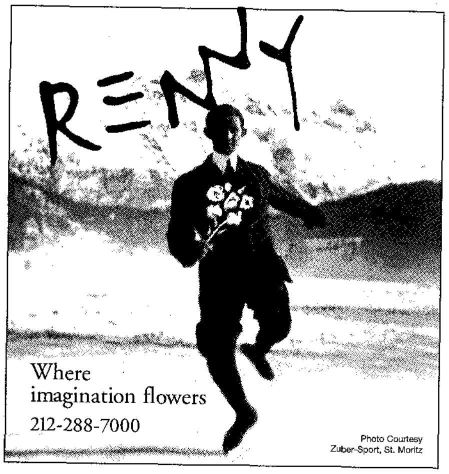

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Exam (Controlled Substance and Marihuana) and attach it to the envelope. Next, you run a warrant check on the computer, take prints, and bring the perp up to the squad room to be debriefed by detectives, who ask if he knows of and is willing to tell about other crimes.

The prisoner is then searched again and delivered to Central Booking, at Criminal Court. There he waits in a holding cell until he is arraigned before a judge. At C.B., you photograph the prisoner and have him examined by the Emergency Medical Service, interviewed by the Criminal Justice Agency for his bail application, and searched yet again. Only then is he in the system, and out of your hands. Next, you see an assistant district attorney and write up and swear to a document that is also called a complaint. The entire process, from the arrest to the signing of the complaint, usually takes around five hours—if nothing goes wrong.

THERE are arrests that cops hope and train for like athletes, and in this felony Olympics, collars for homicides, pattern crimes, drugs by the kilo, and automatic weapons are considered gold medals. But the likelihood that things will go wrong with arrests seems to escalate with their importance: a baroque legal system, combined with the vagaries of chance, provides an inexhaustible source of misadventure. You feel like a diver on the platform who has just noticed that all the judges are Russian.

There was my rapist, a match for a pattern of sexual assaults on elderly women. My partner and I responded to a report that a suspicious person was lurking in the stairwell of a project, one floor up from the latest attack. When the man saw us, he ran, shouting, "Help me! Get a video camera!" We wrestled with him for what seemed like ages; he was limber and strong and sweat-soaked, as slippery as a live fish, and was chewing on a rolled-up dollar bill filled with cocaine. He looked just like the police sketch, and also had distinctive green eyes, which victims had described. He had been staying on that floor with his girlfriend until he beat her up and she threw him out, on the same day as the last attack. He was the rapist, beyond a doubt.

At the precinct, he collapsed, and he told the paramedics he'd ingested three grams of cocaine. At the hospital, his heart rate was two hundred and twenty beats per minute, and he was made to drink an electrolyte solution and eat activated charcoal, which caused him to drool black. He was handcuffed to a cot in the E.R. while the midnight pageant of medical catastrophes was brought in. There was an E.D.P. (an emotionally disturbed person) who had bitten clean through his tongue, clipping into it a precise impression of his upper teeth. Another E.D.P., an enormous drunk picked up from the streets, was writhing and thrashing as a diminutive Filipina nurse tried to draw blood: "Now I prick you! Now I just prick you!" An old man threw up, and another prisoner-patient, handcuffed to the cot next to him, kindly handed him the closest receptacle he could find—a plastic pitcher half filled with urine, which splashed back as he vomited, and made him vomit more.

I'd worked almost twenty-four hours by the time we got back to the precinct, when a detective from Special Victims called to say that my perp had already been taken in for a lineup, a few days before, and had not been identified as the rapist. This meant that we had to let him go. I'd felt nothing toward my suspect throughout our ordeal, even when I fought with him, although I believed he had done hideous, brutal things. But now, suddenly, I hated him, because he was no longer a magnificent and malignant catch—he was just some random asshole who had stolen an entire day of my life.

A few days later, I saw him on the street, and he said hello. I didn't. A few days after that, he beat up his girlfriend again, then disappeared. The rapes stopped.

WHADDAYA got? This is what the boss—usually a sergeant—asks when he arrives at a scene, to make a decision or review one you've made. You tell him, I got a dispute, a matched pair of bloody noses, a shaky I.D. on a chain snatch; I got a lady with a stopped-up toilet who thinks I'm gonna help mop the bathroom; I got an order of protection that says I have to throw the husband out of the house, but he has custody of the three kids because she's a junkie and they have nowhere to go; I got twenty-seven facts in front of me, too many and not enough, in a broken heap like they fell off the back of a truck, which left yesterday.

When you arrive at the scene of an incident, you have a few seconds to take stock—to make a nearly instantaneous appraisal of a jumble of allegations concerning injuries, insults, histories, relationships between neighbors, brothers, lovers, ex-lovers, lovers again—all this with roots of enmity as tangled and deep as those among Balkan tribes. You say, "No, I just need to know what happened *today*." The outpouring of stories can move like a horse race—a hectic and headlong jostling for position, yet with everything moving in the same direction, toward the same end. Or it can turn out to be like a four-car crash at an intersection, where all the drivers sped up to lay triumphant claim to the right of way. Brawls often conclude with such a profusion of contradictory stories that you simply take the losers to the hospital and the winners to jail.

When we answered an emergency call from a woman whom I'll call Jocelyn (all the names in this piece, including my own, have been changed), her complaint seemed to be a simple case of assault; her assailant, George, who was the father of her infant daughter, had already left the scene. Jocelyn moved stiffly and was covered with scuffs and scratches, and one earlobe was notched where an earring had been pulled out. She was surrounded by a phalanx of female relatives who let out a steady stream of consolations and curses, all attesting to George's history of violence. I asked her about her earlobe, and she said, "Oh, that's old," and, looking closer, I saw that it was, and so were many of the marks on her. But then she lifted up her pant leg and showed me a fresh red scrape that covered most of the kneecap, and the course was clear. I asked for a detailed description and got one: "He's about five-eight and two hundred pounds, a lotta muscles and a bald head. Gonna take a lotta you cops to lock him up, 'cause he on parole for armed robbery and he say he ain't goin' back for nothin'!"

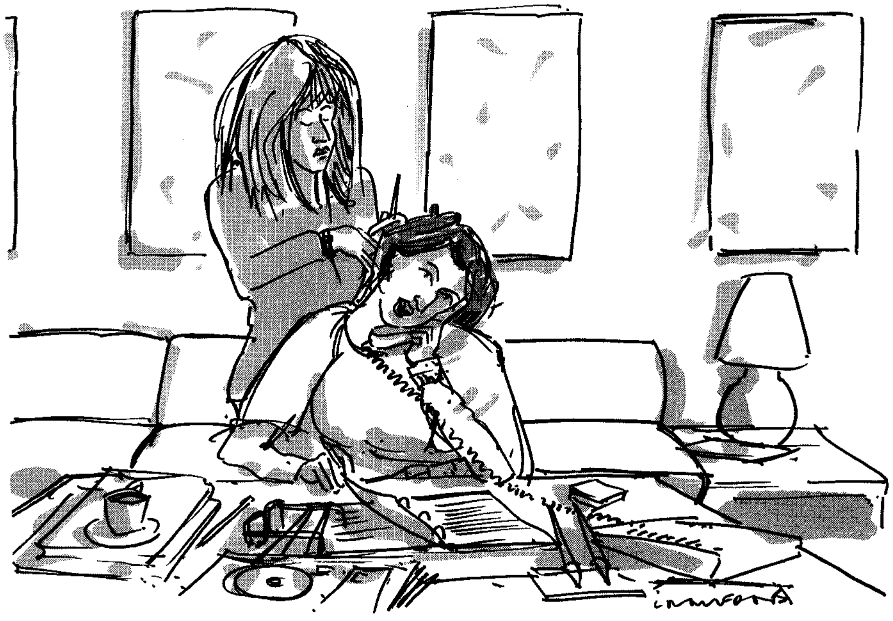
"Does he have a weapon now?"

"Wouldn't be surprised."

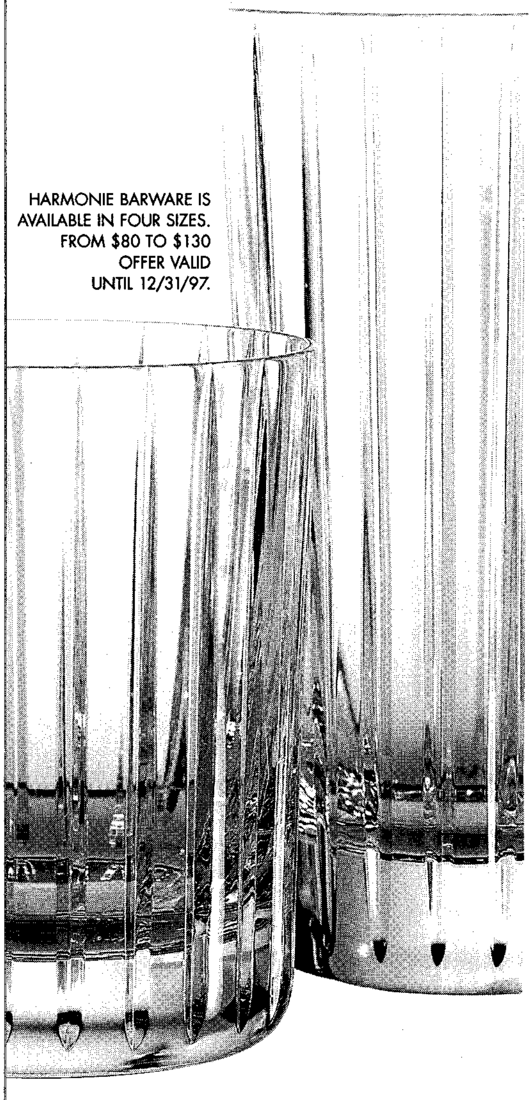
When my partner spotted him on the street, I called him over to us, and he came, without delay. "You George?" I asked, and he said that he was, in a clear, precise diction that was unusual for the street. He'd spent his time upstate well. I asked if he'd fought with Jocelyn, and he seemed mildly embarrassed, as if he had found out that they'd awakened the neighbor's baby. "Yeah, we did argue, over some stupid little thing."

"Tell you what," I said. "Take a walk with us up there. Let's straighten it out." The only matter to be straightened out was the "confirmatory identification," a procedural nicety in which I was glad to have his innocent coöperation. His lack of concern was disconcerting, and suggested either that her story was shaky or that his reflexes and instincts were wildly askew.

Upstairs, Jocelyn made the I.D. I discreetly put my location and condition—"Holding one"—over the air and gently asked George for a lengthy, time-killing version of events. Even when plentiful



*"You know what, Ira? You've had a rough day. Don't make me part of it."*



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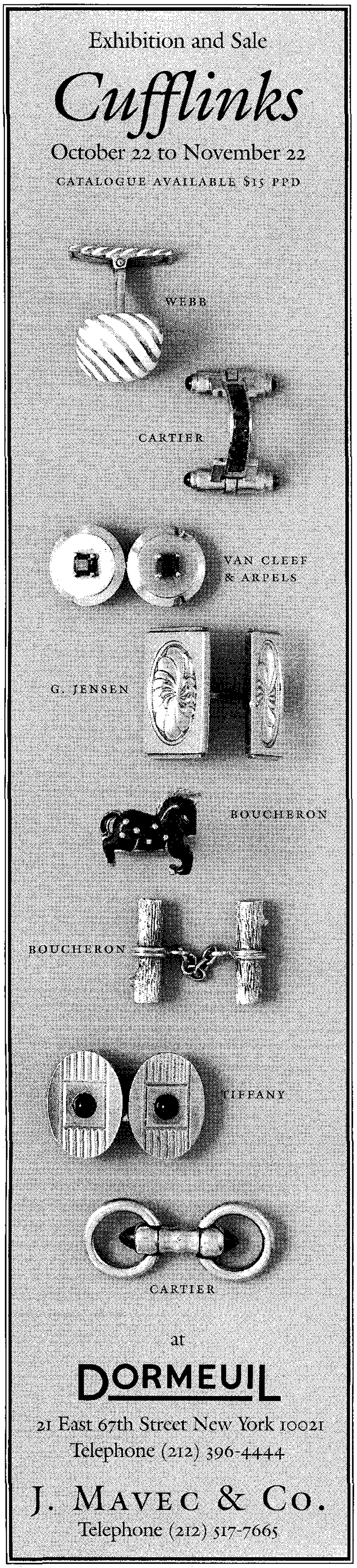
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reinforcements arrived, and his alarm became evident, he didn't give up, but pulled back as someone tried, gently, to take his arm. Given his strength and the dimensions of the cinder-block hallway where we had gathered, no one wanted a brawl. He began to shake, and to bellow "I did not hit her!" and "I am not going back to prison!" We managed to coax him into restraints while he continued to shout, calling for neighbors to tell us what was really going on.

As we took George downstairs, he began to pitch his version of events: Jocelyn was a crackhead; he had custody of their infant daughter; he was angry at Jocelyn because she left the baby alone; her marks were from a fight she had yesterday; lots of people had seen her attack him earlier that day, and would testify that he had never raised a hand against her. On the street outside, one woman—who looked like a crackhead herself—said she had fought Jocelyn last night, and a man said he'd seen George endure Jocelyn's beating him without protest. Toni, whom George referred to as his fiancée, and who also had a child by him, happened by and joined in, shaking her head in disapproval of Jocelyn. But I still had a complainant, an I.D., a fresh injury, and no choice. And when George admitted that he "might have knocked her down" I didn't feel bad about bringing him in.

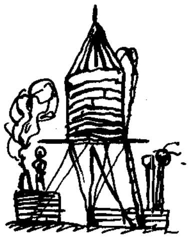
At the precinct, George alternated between brooding reveries on injustice and civil, reasonable explanations of his predicament. Then he suddenly assumed a soft-voiced and menacing tone, so that I couldn't tell if he was putting on a mask or dropping one. "I did time, man, time," he murmured urgently. "I know people who rob every day. I know people who sell guns, sell machine guns. I know people sell you a grenade, man, I could help you out."

Short of gunfire, nothing has as strong an effect on a cop as the word "gun." Guns are unique in their ability to change nobodies and wanna-bes into genuinely bad men in an instant. And while there is nothing more serious than apprehending a dangerous criminal, it also seems like boyhood itself when you can spend your days trying to get the bad guys. That was why, if I almost believed George when he told me about Jocelyn, I almost loved him when he told me about the guns.

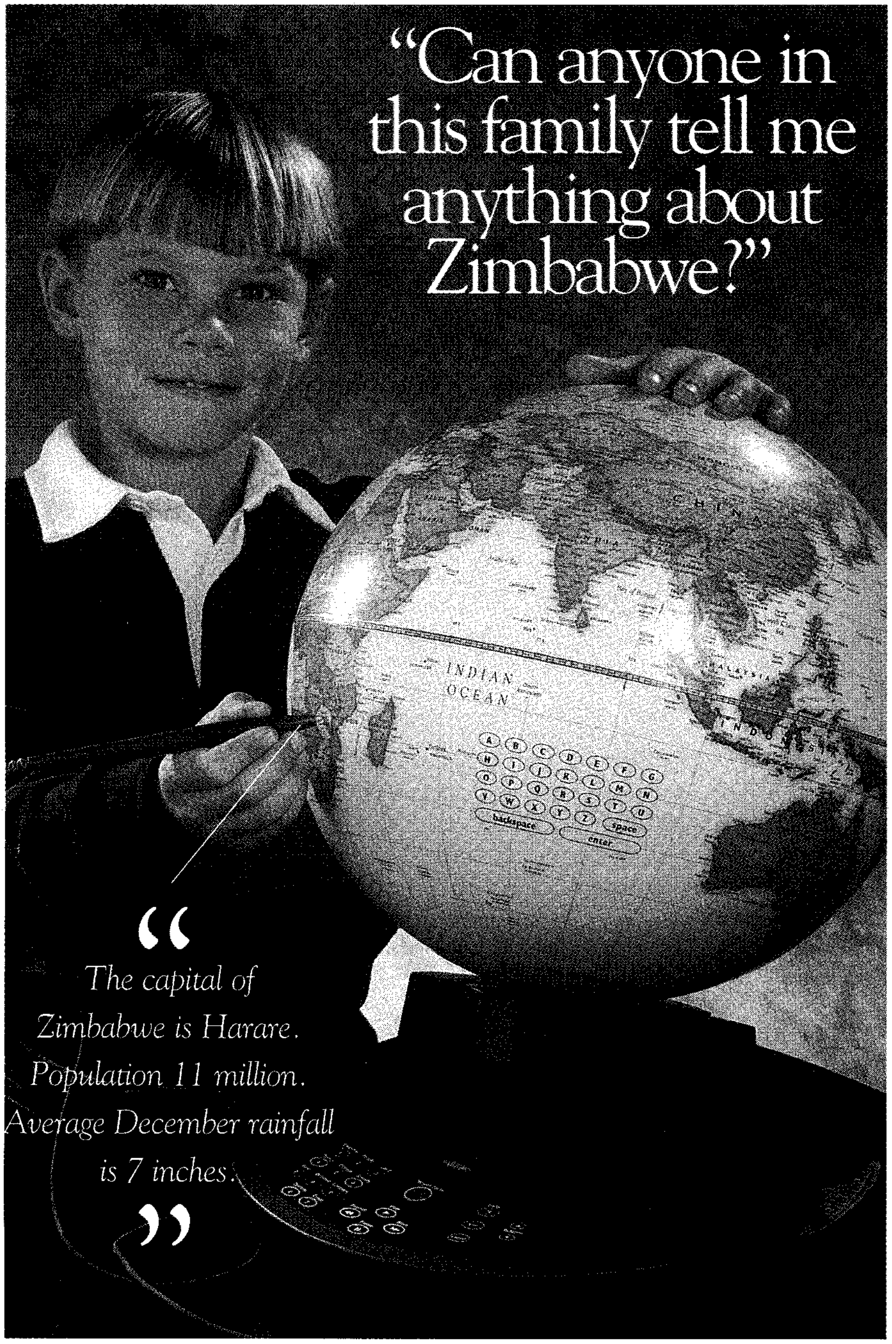
I tried not to let it show, though. I didn't want to get greedy—to let the balance tip from buyer to seller. Not long before, a similar story—completely detailed, wholly plausible, legally sworn—had led me, along with thirty other cops, some equipped with full-body armor and shotguns, to raid an apartment where we expected to find a crate of semi-automatics but instead found a dildo and ten thousand roaches. I knew that if George meant it he'd say it more than once, and for his information to be useful he'd have to be willing to keep talking when he wasn't wearing my handcuffs. So I treated him with consideration—"You got change? I'll get you a soda"—and continued to process the arrest.

As it turned out, however, nothing came to pass. Jocelyn dropped the charges, and even came down to Central Booking to take George home. He was elated as he left, telling me, "Watch, I'm gonna get you a gun collar!" Laughing, I called after him, "Give me your number," and waited to see his reaction. He hesitated, then came back and gave me his beeper number. "I'm telling you," he said.

For a while after that, whenever I ran into George on the street, he would talk to me. The information was always good but never quite useful: he confirmed things I knew, and told me about witnesses to assaults and robberies who wouldn't come forward. I called him once or twice, and my call was never returned.



YOU often start with these cheesy collars: dice, blunts, trespass. It's not what you signed up for, being a glorified hall monitor, if "glorified" is the word. "Public urinator at two o'clock! Let's move in!" But it's part of the job, so you do it—preferably with the discretion you are empowered to exercise. If a group of guys are hanging out smoking marijuana and I'm walking by, one of two things tends to happen. Either I hear a rapid apology, the blunt is tossed—and if it's down a sewer there's no evidence to recover and no basis for a charge, you follow me, guys?—and the group gets a stern word of caution. Or someone decides to lock eyes with me and take a drag, and someone else calls out some cute remark, like "Fuck the police!," and they decline to heed my



# "Can anyone in this family tell me anything about Zimbabwe?"

"The capital of Zimbabwe is Harare. Population 11 million. Average December rainfall is 7 inches."

Mom? Dad? How about Zimbabwe's official language? How far is it by plane from our house? What kind of money do they use?

Can't help me, huh? Did you guys watch too much TV when you were growing up in the Golden Age, or what? I think so.

Okay, watch this. I touch the Odyssey™ globe with the attached pen and *zippo*–it answers all my questions about every country in the world in a normal voice–kinda sounds like you, Dad. Change the mode and listen to those tribal drums and local music. Neat, huh?

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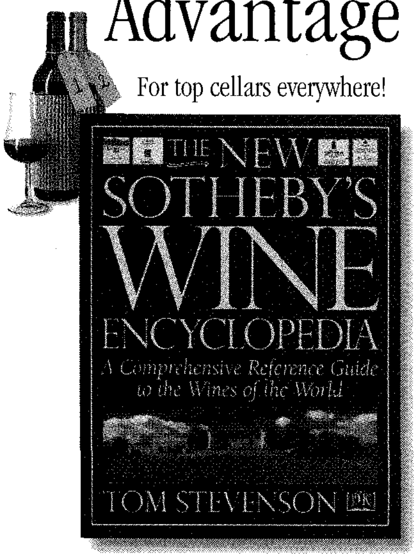
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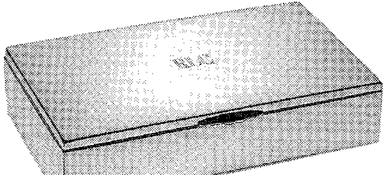

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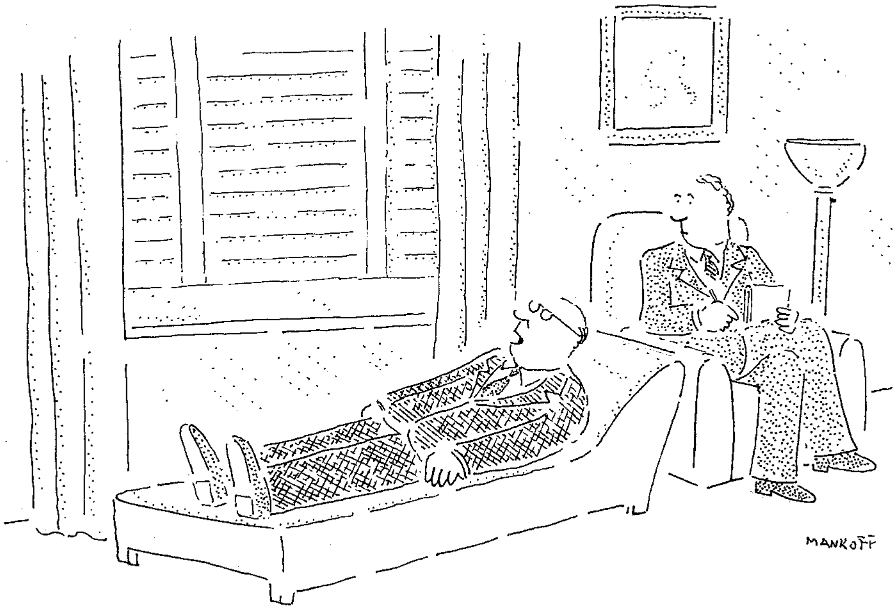


*"Frankly, I've repressed my sexuality so long I've actually forgotten what my orientation is."*

word to the wise: "Break out, guys. Bounce!" No? And in seconds, or in a minute if I decide I want backup, they're all up against a wall. I start going into their pockets, taking names.

If someone has I.D., I might run a name over the air, and if there's no warrant out for this person's arrest he'll get a summons for Disorderly Conduct at the scene. But most guys like these don't carry I.D., and you take them into the precinct to search them thoroughly, run the checks, and write the summonses. Often, someone will have drugs on him, or a stolen credit card. One in five will have an active warrant, in my experience, and fully half will come up on the computer as "Robbery Recidivist" or as "Target Narcotic Violator," which means that they have a number of convictions for mugging or dealing. Maybe they were just hanging out tonight, but, as far as I'm concerned, tonight they've lost their street-corner privileges. And now and then you find a prize, like a hard-core felon hiding behind a bottle of Bacardi.

For the most part, the time you spend with people you like and respect occurs at a low point in their lives: they've just been robbed, their child is missing, or their husband has collapsed from chest pains. You are less the bearer of bad news than the proof of it. More often, you become bound up in lives that are dismal and grim: parolees and their teen-age girlfriends, thugs, drunks, and junkies, E.D.P.s taking too much or too little for their pain. Other people you never get to know, even after you've spent some time with them.

The old man lived alone and died crumpled on the floor in a little alley between the bed and the wall. He was wearing a dirty shirt and no pants. His apartment was small and cluttered, and all his clothes were in old suitcases, or were stacked beside them, as if he were packing for a long trip. There were two televisions—one old, one brand-new. A manic kitten darted amid the piles of clothes and rubbish around the old man's body. Because he lived alone, we had to search for valuables, in the presence of a sergeant, and voucher them at the precinct. We found his military discharge papers, his false teeth, and stacks of pornography. The other cops left, and I stayed. It was my turn to sit on the D.O.A., waiting for the Medical Examiner to have a look, then for the morgue to take him away.

A man knocked at the door and said, "I took care of him. I'm his stepson. He wanted me to have the TV."

I told him to get some proof, and said that until then he should take the kitten. He left—without the kitten—and I turned on the television.

Less than an hour later, he returned

with a lady friend. Both were completely drunk, and demanded in unison, "We loved him! We was his family! Let's have that TV!"

I closed the door on them and sat back down. There was a phone call. I waited, then picked it up, hoping that no one who cared for him would learn of his death by accident, from a stranger.

"Is Mr. Jones at home?"

"No, he isn't."

"Is this . . . Mrs. Jones?"

"No." But thanks for asking.

"When will he be available?"

"No time soon."

"When should I call back?"

"Can I ask who this is?"

"Mr. Jones had recently expressed an interest in our low-cost insurance policies, and—"

"He's not interested."

"And who, may I ask, is this?"

"The police. Mr. Jones is dead. That's why I'm here."

"Well, do you think—"

"Dead."

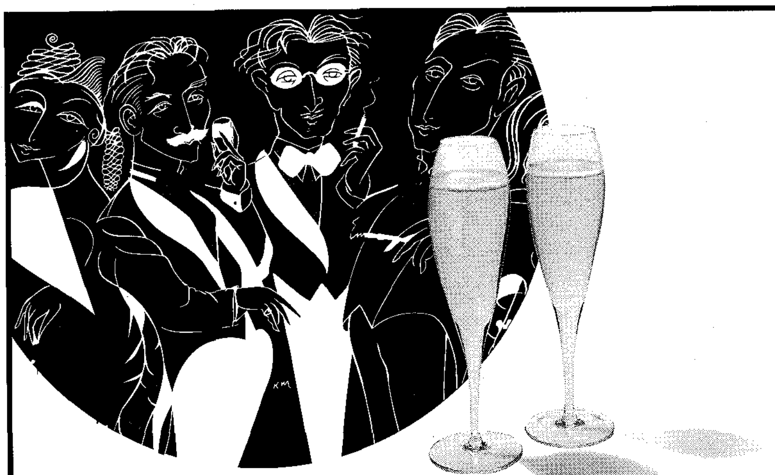
"There may be some—"

"Dead, dead, dead. He's stuck to the floor six feet away from me, guy. No sale."

"Have you considered whether you have all the coverage you need, Officer?"

I hung up and went back to watching television.

MOST of the time, the enforcement of the law follows a simple moral algorithm—the sum of what you should do and what you can. If the perp is there, you make an arrest; if he's not, you make a report. If he runs, you chase. If he shoots, you shoot back. The facts, rather than your feelings, dictate the course of action, but the close correspondence of the two is a satisfaction of the job. Sometimes, though, the victims are less sympathetic than the offenders, and an odd bond develops between cop and perp which can emotionally skew the equation. One woman called to say that her thirteen-year-old son had locked her out of her house; she had obtained a Family Court order that allowed her to call the police whenever she couldn't control him. For over an hour, we knocked, reasoned, and threatened, and fiddled with the locks. We had ample time to find out about the family. "Is there anyone—someone he isn't



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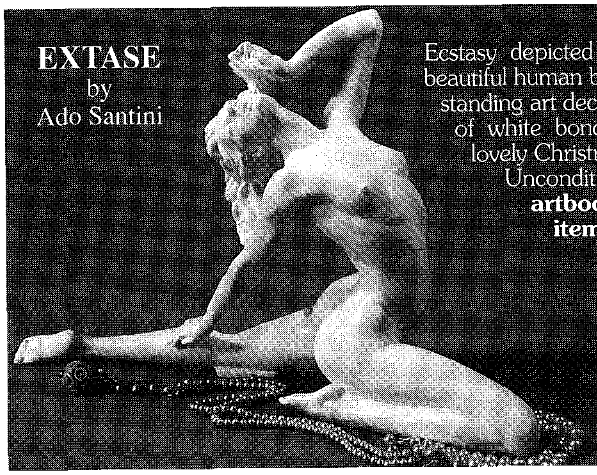

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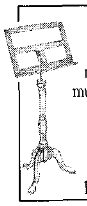

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mad at—who could talk to him, get him to open the door?" I asked.

"Oh, he's not mad at me," she said. I let it go.

"Maybe a friend from school?"

"I been tellin' him to go to school since last year," she said, adding that he stopped because the other kids beat him up. Asked why, she said that he wore makeup and women's clothes. My partner went to get a coat hanger, to see if he could work the door chain off. The woman went on about how the boy's father left her, how she worked, how the boy stayed out till dawn. She paused a moment, as if she'd just remembered, and said, "I had a three-year-old—she died. She was pretty." She paused again, then said, "I wish that faggot never was born."

My partner got the door open. The thirteen-year-old, a light-skinned black boy with hair dyed a sunny yellow, was dozing. I told him to get some things together, because he was going to a juvenile holding facility now and to court in the morning. By his bedside I saw a list of around twenty names—all men's, and all but a few with beeper rather than phone numbers. His mother picked up a skimpy pair of gold satin shorts, held them up to her substantial waist, and said, "Who wears these? Not me!"

What friendly or fatherly advice was there to offer? "I didn't peddle my ass when I was thirteen, young man, and now I have a cushy civil-service job"? We drove downtown without saying much, and I haven't seen him since.

Another day, on the street, I noticed that a middle-aged woman was staring at me, in the throes of indecision about whether to approach. I went over to her and asked if I could help. "My husband, he beats me, he beats me very bad," she said. I pressed her for details, telling her how, even if I couldn't make an arrest, she could get an order of protection, but she brushed me aside: "No, no, that's all no good. My daughter, she says she's just gonna get somebody to take care of him."

I told her that if he was beaten he'd probably take it out on her anyway, and again she saw I didn't get it. "I don't mean beat him up," she explained. "I mean take care of him. You know!" She raised her eyebrows, like she was letting me in on a sweet deal. "What do you think?"

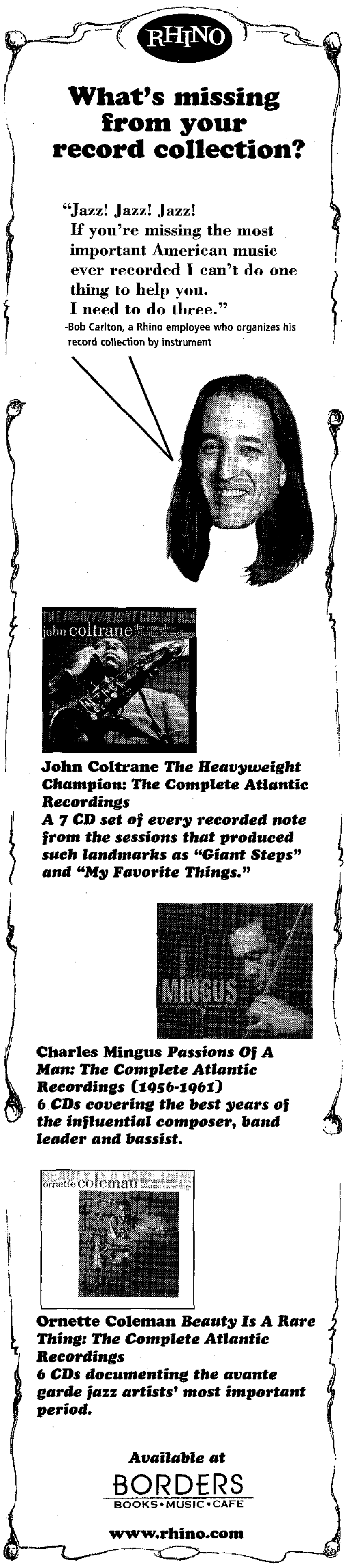
"Lady, you noticed that I'm wearing a blue hat, badge, the rest? That I'm a cop? And you want to know what I think about having your husband murdered?"

Before she could ask me to quote a price, we parted, each convinced that the other had only a flimsy grasp of reality. A few hours later, another officer and I responded to a call of a "violent domestic dispute." A burly, middle-aged man answered the door and allowed us in. He was in his underwear and seemed at ease, smiling as he showed us around: there was no one else there, and no sign of a struggle of any kind. Even so, I didn't like him, and the female cop with me had the same reaction, but stronger: he had a corrupt and military air, as if he were an aide to some South American President for Life. As we left, I noticed a photograph of the woman I had spoken with earlier hanging on the wall. She was trying to win our argument, it seemed to me, saying, "Look at him. Look. If this one ended up dead, would you really come after me?"

I CONTINUED to have hopes for George. I didn't know if he was much more than a corner hoodlum, but the corners he favored were hot ones. And then he came to my attention again, formally, when he beat up his fiancée, Toni. The night before, she told me, George had knocked her down, shoved her against a wall, and confined her in a bedroom when she threatened to call the police. He'd slept at the door of the room, on the floor, to prevent her from escaping. The next morning, he went out and brought her back breakfast, drew her a bath, and then walked her up to her mother's house, where she called the cops.

When I came for George at his job, his rebuttal was as edgily eloquent and semi-plausible as the last time: Yes, they argued, but, no, he didn't hit her ("Did you see a mark, a single mark on her?"), and if he shoved her once it was because she said she'd have him arrested if he ever left her. A cop witnessed that, he added, and we'd have to find him. He had a letter, in which she made that threat: we'd have to find it. I told him that I still had to take him in. He shrugged his acceptance, and we left for the precinct.

For the past year or so, it's been procedure to debrief every prisoner who comes into the precinct. Most perps won't talk, and many are as ignorant of the local underworld as they are of portfolio management. A detective asks,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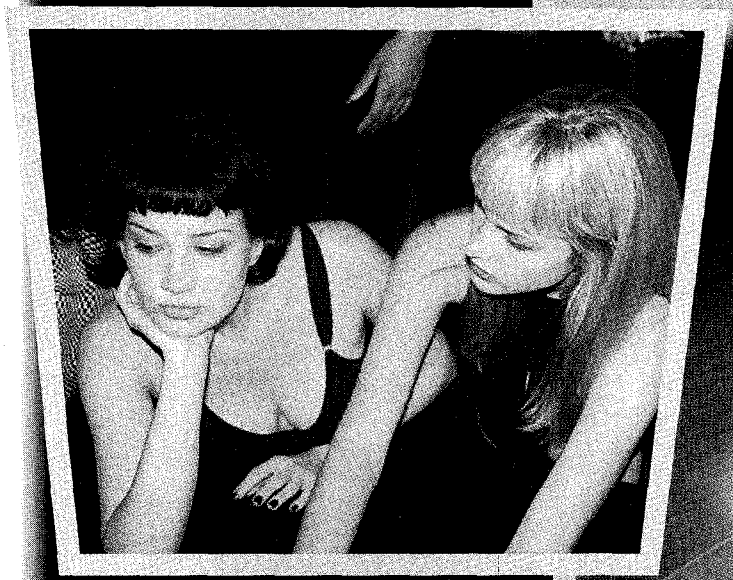
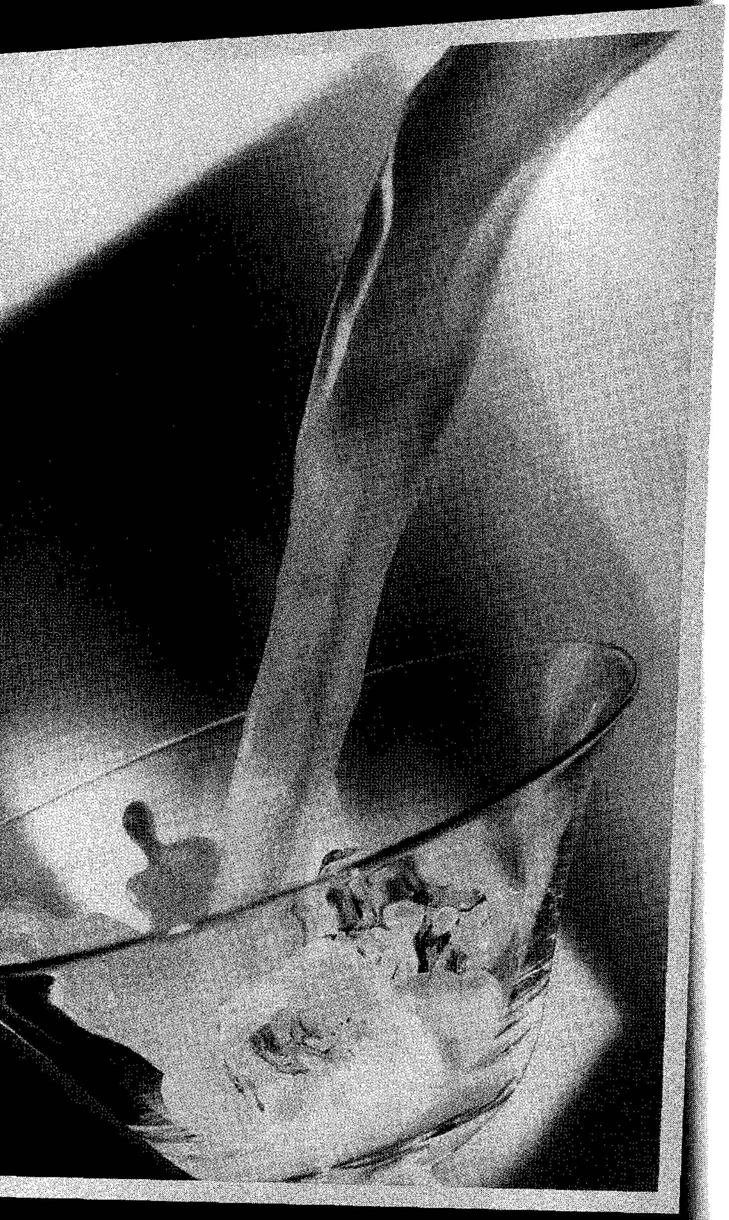
# BRING ON THE NIGHT





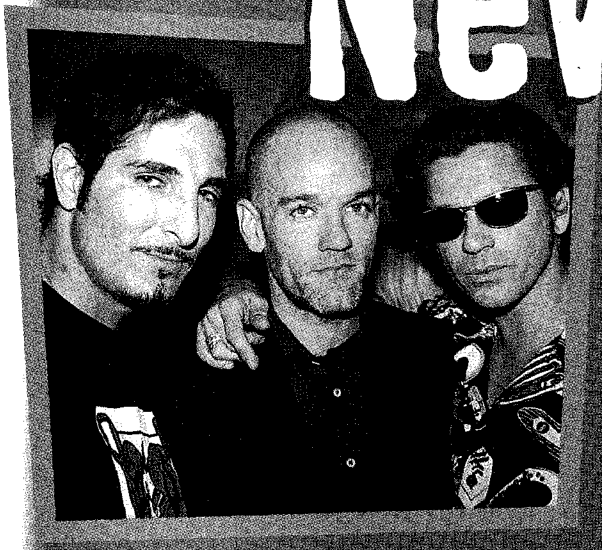
### by Claire Whitcomb

It used to be that you could define elegance: the right dress, the right drink, the right bar. A simple equation, back in the heyday of the cocktail set. Yet in these big-spender, martini-mad times, the cocktail hour stretches across an entire night and the trail leading to the right spot shifts like the swirl of smoke from a Cohiba. But it can be followed. Just listen for the sound of the silver shaker, the ring of champagne glasses, the warm glow that accompanies a sip of tawny port, small-batch bourbon, or single-malt Scotch. And then get ready to bring on the night at its heady best.

Let's face it. Everyone's talking about Balthazar, Keith McNally's succulent, red-awninged, trés French bistro. You can't get a dinner reservation until the millennium, but you can have a glass of champagne or a *formidable* beer at the bar. From there wander to Balthazar's sister, the still-hot vodka-mecca Pravda. "People tend to drink their ports and cognacs after dinner at Balthazar and then come here for their more adventurous drinks," says Peter, the other McNally. "Here you look down the bar and see every color of martini." Also new this fall at Pravda: the Red (of course) Margarita, made with pomegranate instead of lime juice.

From Pravda, take the late-night SoHo tour by following the ever-fickle crowds from candlelit Wax to moody Chaos—havens for Absolut and Ketel One cosmopolitans and beautiful young things. (At the latter, $275 quarts of vodka and $1,000 magnums of champagne are de rigueur table orders). For a break from the glam-scene, head east to Alphabet City's new Drinkland, a Jetson-like soda fountain for the classics. "We're into old-fashioned drinks, nothing pretentious," says co-owner David Baxley (of Cafe Aubette fame).

# New York



Just east of Union Square, check out cigar-friendly Cibar, a hideaway tucked under the Inn at Irving Place. Keep an eye out for hotel regulars like Winona Ryder, and take-off with Cibar's "flight" program: tastings of aged cognacs; one-hundred percent agavé tequilas like Patrón, Chinaco, El Tesoro; boutique vodkas including Skyy and Belvedere; spiced rums like Captain Morgan or Bacardi; single-malt Scotches such as Glenfiddich and The Macallan; specialty Scotches that include Loch Dhu and Talisker, and small-batch bourbons like Booker's and Blanton's.

Still smoking: Club Macanudo, the cigar-bar that sparked the trend. "People talk to me," says bartender Arnie Stevens from his stand next to the cognacs. "I say, 'You want to try something out? Here, I won't charge you if you don't like it.' Sometimes people don't know what they want until I tell them." What they want, he figures, is Scotch (there are sixty different single-malts), port, cognac, cigars, and the Macanudo Martini (Beefeater Gin, Alizé, and cranberry with passion fruit garnish). "This whole cigar, martini, and steak thing is happening real big, and we're right in the middle of it."

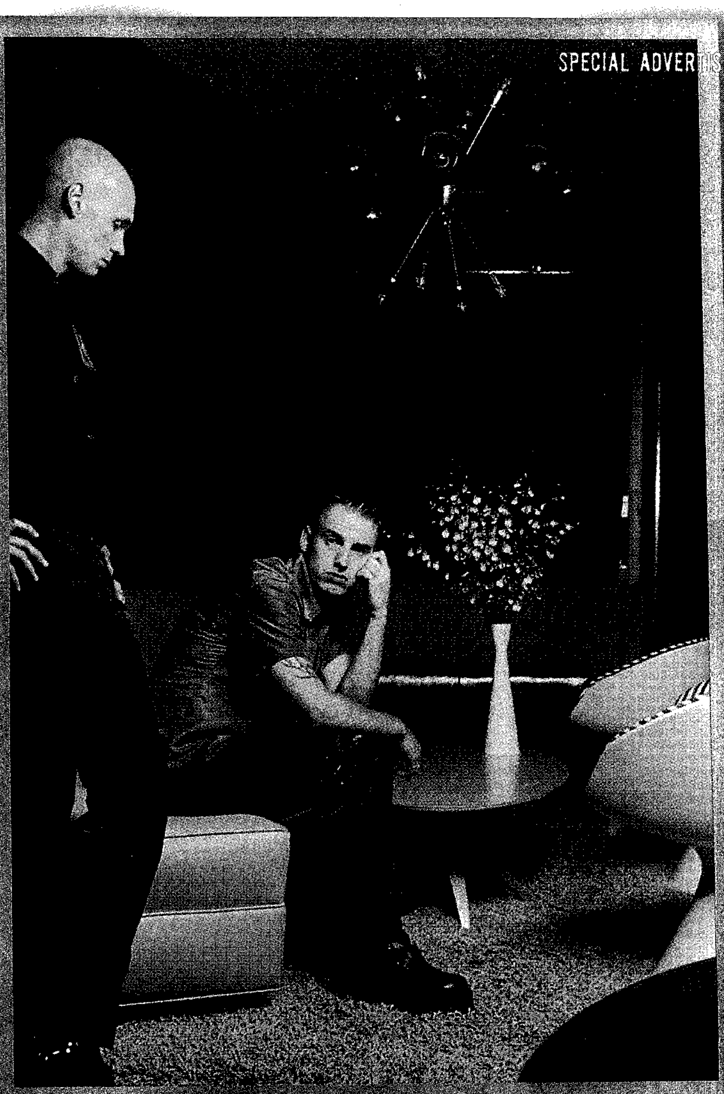
If you want to go where the drinks couldn't be any better, take the elevator up, up, up to the Promenade Bar at the Rainbow Room. Behind the bar is Dale DeGroff, arguably the best in the business (his recipe for the Cosmopolitan is considered definitive). "I went back to what was served at the old Stork Club, what was in old cocktail books," says DeGroff, who has been consulted by Pravda, Balthazar, and the like. He's a missionary for fresh ingredients—no mixes, no fillers, none of those sugar waters from a spout. Taste a Singapore Sling, just as it was made at Raffles' bar in Singapore, and you'll realize that everything you imbibed in college really was a bad dream.

> **"This whole cigar, martini, and steak thing is happening real big, and we're right in the middle of it."**

Cover photos (left) Chaos ©Marco Ricci, (right) Graphistock–Giuseppe Bergamo; this page (top right) Chaos ©Marco Ricci, (left) Wax and Sway's new owner, Nur Khan, R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe, and Michael Hutchence of INXS ©Steve Azzara.

BRING ON THE NIGHT

# San Francisco



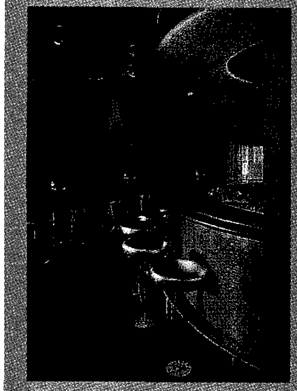
Red, red, red. It's the color that everyone who's anyone is seeing at San Francisco's hip, entirely Red Room. Order a Red Martini (Skyy vodka infused with cranberry) from the all-female bartenders (they wear black, not red) and see who's in town (Keanu Reeves, Jon Bon Jovi, the Smashing Pumpkins).

If you're feeling blue, Backflip's the answer. Set in the Phoenix Hotel, favored by music industry types, its watery blue back room opens onto a pool that looks like it has been painted by David Hockney. Ask for a Cosmopolitan—"We make about 180 on a Friday night," says bartender Susan Fedroff—and survey what she calls "the excessively fashion-conscious hipsters. If you can grab a seat, there's no reason not to stay all night and people-watch."

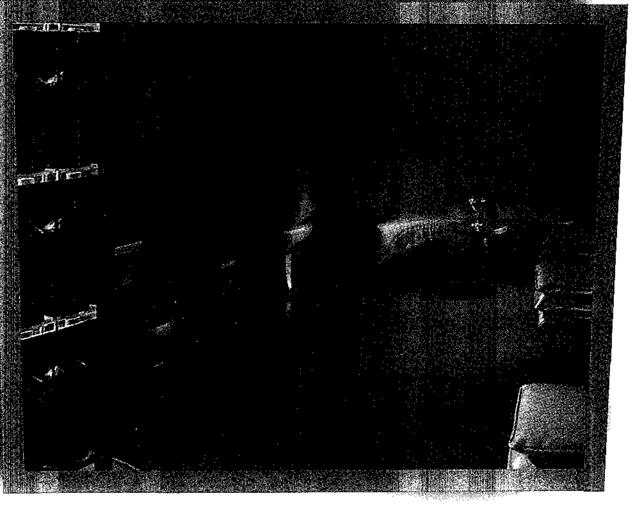
> **Backflip's watery blue back room opens onto a pool that looks like it has been painted by David Hockney.**

Unless, of course, you want to dance at Liquid, a Mission District hideaway for the ultra-hip. A small sign hand painted on an old storefront is all that indicates you're in the right spot. Inside there's a pool table, seats recycled from old cars, and a great vibe. What are people drinking? "Jack and Coke and small-batch bourbons," says bar manager Chris Pitts. "We sell as much bourbon as we did gin a few years ago." The night to go: Thursday, when DJs spin dance-jazz at the Royal Jelly party.

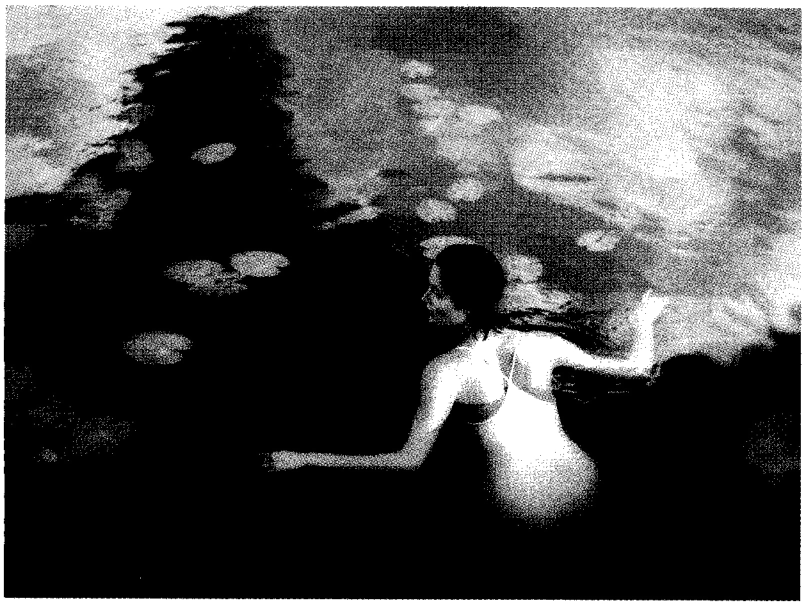
For live jazz, nothing beats Bruno's, a supper club with gangster booths, fifties light fixtures. And patrons are ordering what were once cocktail-menu fixtures—manhattans, martinis, and Singapore Slings. "It's not just a retro thing," says bar manager Peter Gowdy. "People are discovering the pleasure of a well made cocktail. It used to be that they'd start to drink champagne and fine wine at a certain point in their lives. Now they're into cocktails."



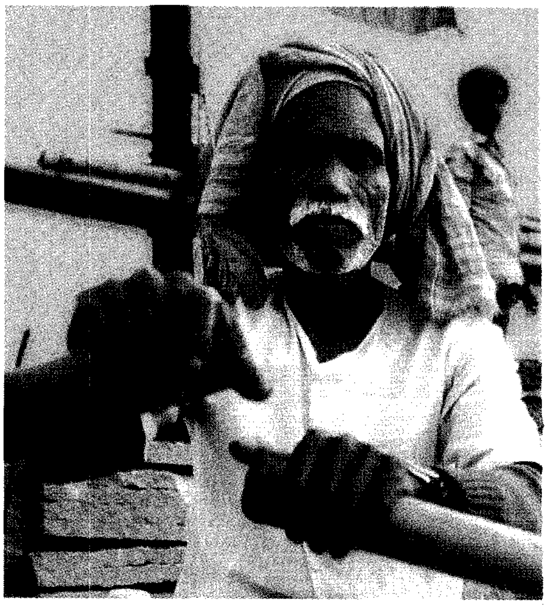
That isn't news to Doug Biederbeck, owner of Bix, the Marina District supper club that helped spark the cocktail renaissance. "Nine years ago our top cocktail was a dry martini." It still is, but Bix cuts new ground with other classic drinks like Between the Sheets, Sazerac, and, believe it or not, the Bloody Mary. "I did some research and as far as I could tell the Bloody Mary was invented in London. It was served shaken, without ice," he says. "I tried it and thought it was so superior." Check out Bix's version, made with whole tomato juice instead of concentrate, and you'll begin to understand what cocktails today are all about.



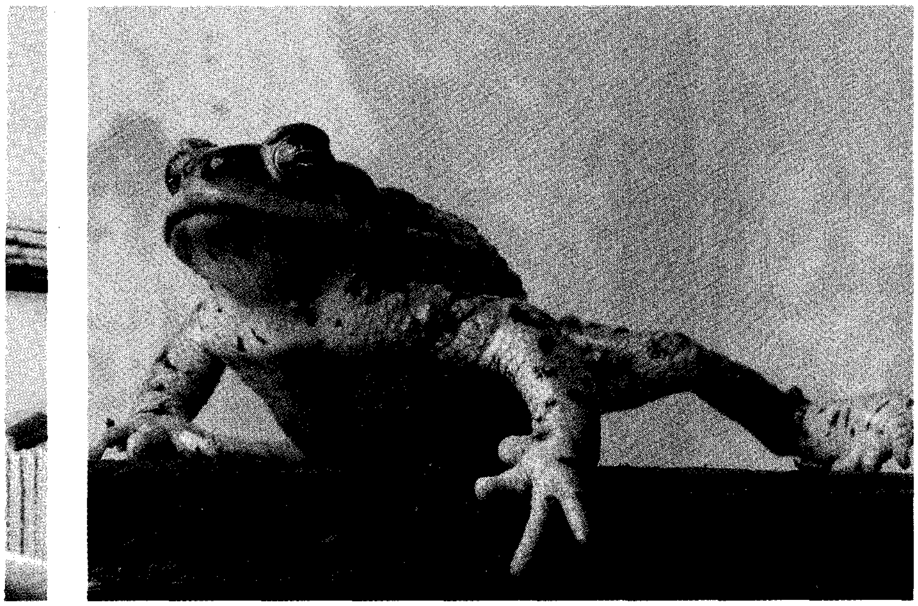
Backflip, pictured top and [illegible]



In a past life I was a mermaid who fell in love with an ancient mariner. I pulled him into the sea to be my husband. I didn't know he couldn't breathe underwater.



I was a philosopher who believed the sun was carried across the sky on the back of a large turtle.



once i was a court jester.
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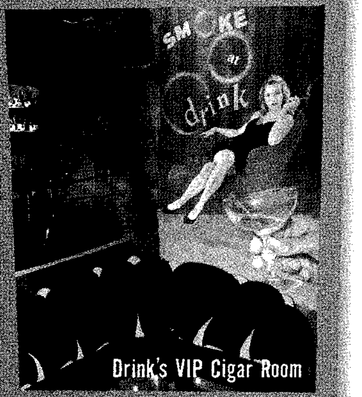
BRING ON THE NIGHT

# Chicago



Drink's VIP Cigar Room

Liquid
Kitty

Liquid Kitty

"Everyone deserves a little decadence," says Kathryn Sullivan, co-owner of the glamorous new Narcisse in Chicago's River North. This luxe, champagne-and-caviar salon is the epitome of indulgence, nineties style. "People are drinking less, but better," says Sullivan. And why not? Narcisse tempts with twelve champagnes by the glass like Taittinger's and Moët & Chandon White Star, aged cognacs, and charismatic martinis—the "Coco" comes twined with a string of faux pearls you get to take home.

"Today, it's all about presentation," says bartender Al Rohrssen of Jilly's, the club named after Frank Sinatra's road manager. "I'm making a martini and shaking it in a pint-sized, stainless-steel shaker and people say 'Wow,' and I ask, 'Would you like to try one?' We convert a lot of people this way, I'm happy to say." What he's mixing: the Finlandia Dirty Gibson—Finlandia Classic vodka, Spanish olive juice, two Gibson onions, and an olive. His new faithful can be found upstairs at the bistro-style, cigar-friendly swing bar (fifty cigars on the menu) and downstairs at Jilly's Retro Club, where seventies and eighties disco is intent on stayin' alive.

> **Narcisse tempts with twelve Champagnes by the glass...and charismatic martinis—the "Coco" comes twined with a string of faux pearls you get to take home.**

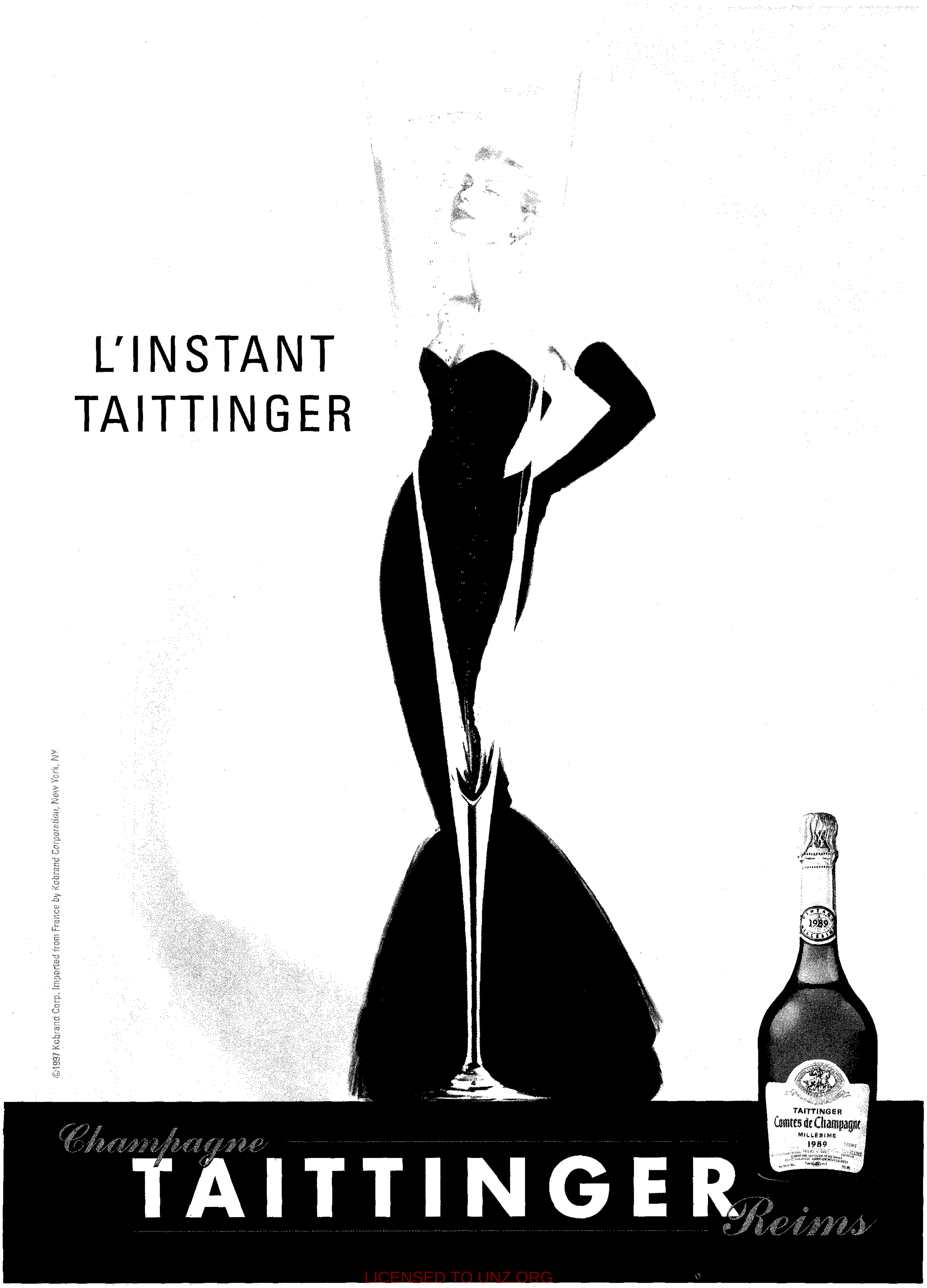
If cocktail making is theater, Drink is Broadway. This newly reincarnated, warehouse-sized fantasyland has great music, six bars ("Drink Tequila," "Drink Vodka," etc.), and a freight elevator to the cigar/VIP room equipped with a full bar. Can a place this gargantuan be this hip? Seeing is believing—if you can get in.

Equally theatrical, the sleek Hudson Club designed by Jordan Mosier (who also designed New York jazz club Iridium) is a modernistic forties-inspired supper club. Look down the long bar and the Armani-suited are testing the twenty tap beers and one hundred wines available by the glass or as a "flight." If this looks like the chic cigar bar crowd, you're right: Hudson Club has a special smoking room in the back.

For real theater, check out loungy new Celluloid, where two screens project cult and classic movies, and the audience sips bourbon, single-malt Scotch, and martinis (there's candy and popcorn, too). If you want the evening's plot to thicken, open a door and enter the psychedelic, dance-the-night-away world of adjacent Liquid Kitty. "It's a seventies funk lounge that looks like Peter Max designed it," says owner Dion Antic, who's responsible for much of what's hot in Chicago. His hits include Iggy's, the very late-night diner, and two happening cigar bars: Harry's Velvet Room (which he calls "a vampire's library with forty different kinds of martinis") and Bruno's Club Deluxe (an Asian-influenced supper club for the martini and sushi set).

Hudson Club

© David Clifton



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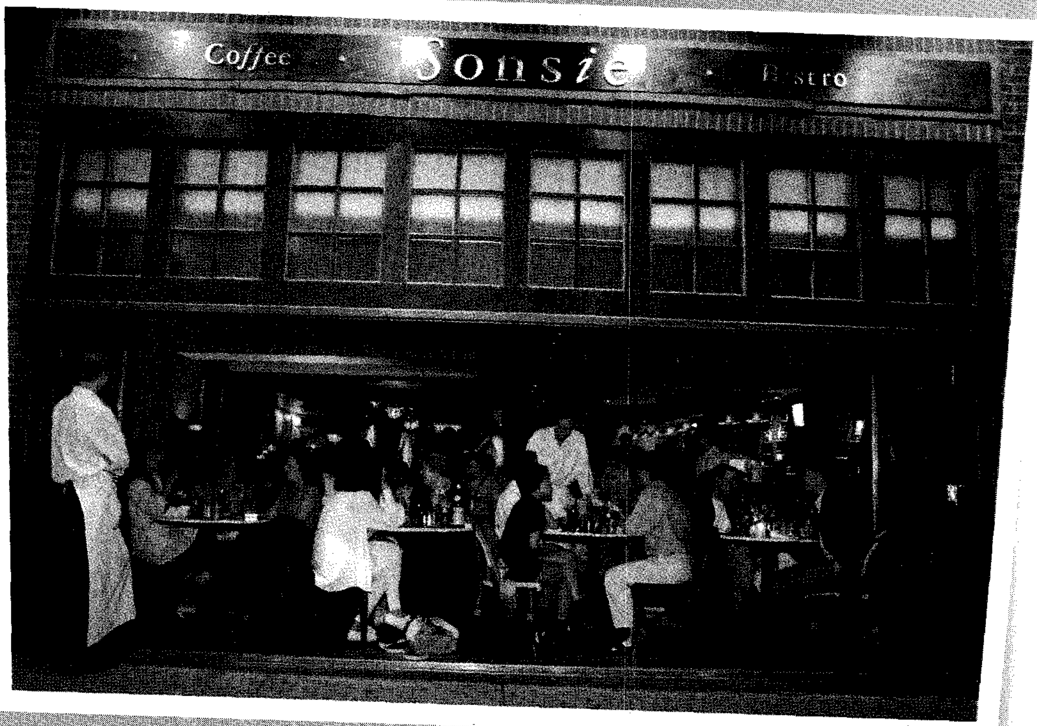
# Boston

BRING ON THE NIGHT



"A sidecar is a good New England drink—golden and autumny, don't you think?" asks Carah McLaughlin, a locally revered bartender who came back from Santa Fe ("I got tired of tequila") to mix her magic at the chic new Restaurant Zinc. "I'm trying to bring back the old drinks," she says. "I don't do B-52s and Slippery Nipples. It takes time to prepare a good cocktail."

Fortunately, customers are willing to wait, not just at Zinc but across the street at Mistral, owner Seth Greenberg's overnight sensation. Like its namesake wind, Mistral has whipped up such a passion that now reservations are taken for the bar as well as the restaurant. "People are coming to have cocktails and see who's here," says manager Jeff Gates. "The curtain is up and they're dressing to be seen." What they're seen drinking is the poser's special, the martini, of course. And they're also sipping champagne, single-barrel bourbons like Wild Turkey, and single-malt Scotches such as Glenfiddich and Glenlivet. "Most people here have an educated palate," says bartender Pamela Friedman. "They'll dare to drink something that isn't sweet."

Biba

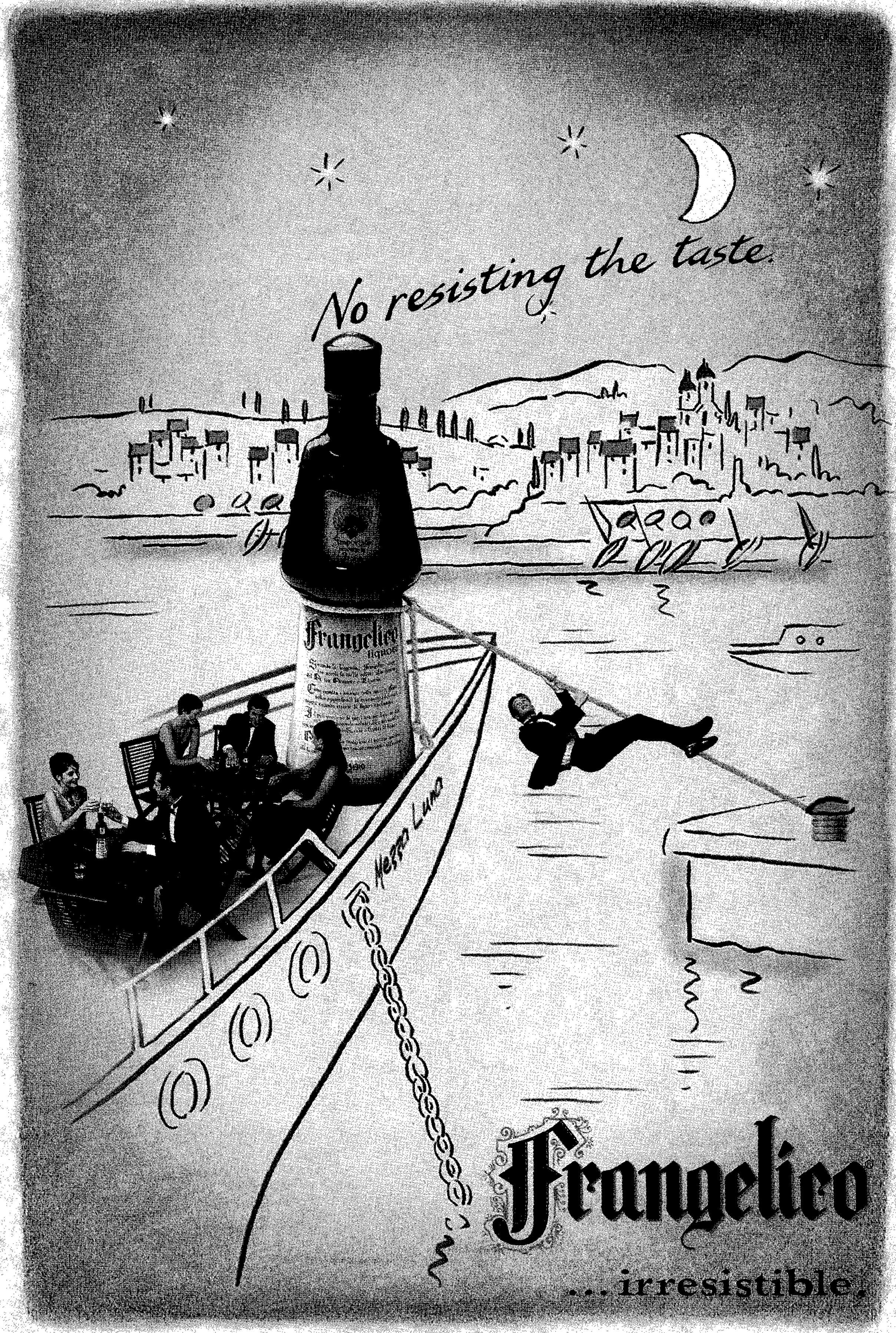
> Like its namesake wind, Mistral has whipped up such a passion that now reservations are taken for the bar as well as the restaurant.

Though reservations aren't needed, the bars at Boston's new breed of gourmet restaurants are the places to be. On the A-list: Silvertone, opened by popular bartender Josh Childs, who steeps his own raspberry vodka for his signature Raspberry Martini; Biba, a cigar haven where the martinis are purple and the tequilas so fine they're sipped like cognac; and Sonsie, known for Ed's Chocolate Martini and its wine list. "First you had the microbrews. Now the tide is turning to wine with interest in the new varietals," says Sonsie bartender Chris O'Brien. That said, there will always be a brouhaha for brewski in Beantown—from Bass Ale and Back Bay IPA, to Samuel Adams and Harpoon.

Not to be missed: the funky Franklin Café, opened in the South End by longtime bartender Maureen "Mo" McLaughlin. Venture into any of Boston's top-shelf bars and you should be able to order a Mo Cocktail that calls for Ketel One vodka and Chambord. "People just started asking for it," she says. Years later, they still are.

Franklin Café

© Dave DuBois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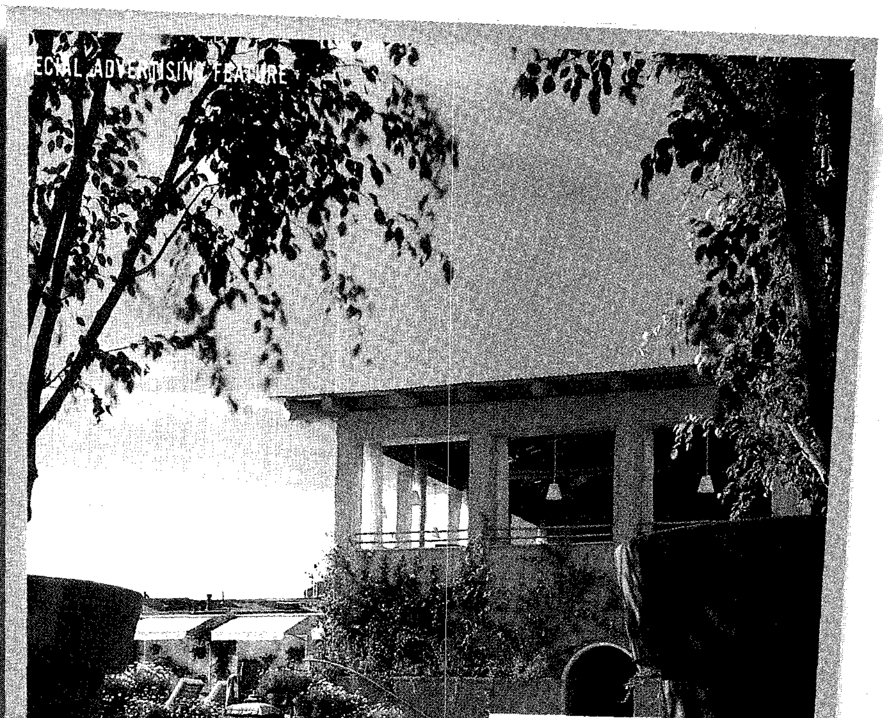
## BRING ON THE NIGHT

# Los Angeles

Skybar and Bar Marmont. Need we say more? Is there anyone twirling a flute of champagne anywhere else in Los Angeles? Well, there's Little Door, organic down to the three wines on its extraordinary list. And The Whiskey, the music industry haunt at the Sunset Marquis, is big with the Jack and Coke crowd, according to owner Rande Gerber. But the Hollywood game of celeb-spotting goes on everywhere. "We had Claire Danes and Drew Barrymore in the other night," says effervescent Lola Dunsworth of Lola's, the gold and leopard-spotted establishment on Fairfax. Inventive martinis—forty strong—are both her trademark and her life story. Try the Stolichnaya cappuccino-flavored Martini or Mrs. Miller's Melon Martini, named for Ali Miller, wife of Dennis. "Ali and I are both from Vancouver," says Lola, "and this reminds me of the melon drinks we used to have there."

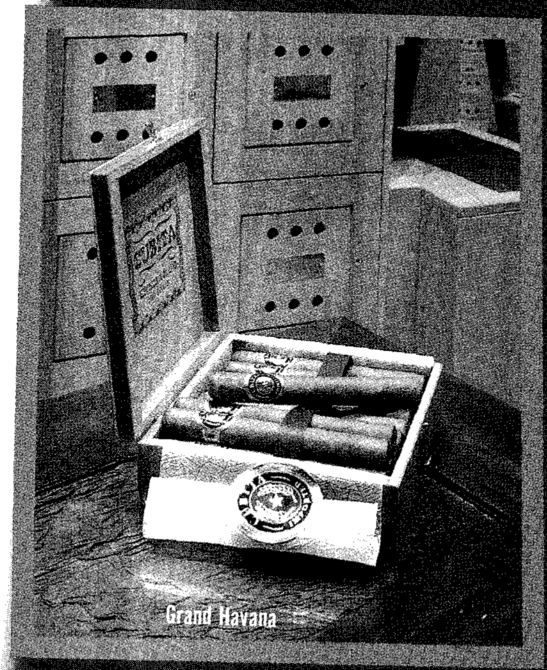


Mondrian Sky Bar

Le Colonial

If you're looking for a touch of the exotic—and who in Los Angeles isn't—try an infused sake under the thatched-roof bar of the hip, new Sushi Roku. Or check a different Asian influence at Le Colonial, a cozy rattan and palm-treed throwback to the era of French Vietnam. What to drink? A Lychee Martini or perhaps Trinquemalle, a mix of exotic juices and rums. "I'm reaching for martini glasses all night long. They're the one thing we run out of," says bartender Tom Hale.

**For a touch of the exotic, try an infused sake under the thatched-roof bar of the hip, new Sushi Roku.**



Grand Havana

For cigars, there's the private Grand Havana Room. At the elegant Hamilton's, Charlie Sheen, Stefanie Powers, and Whoopi Goldberg rent humidors, and regulars trail like smoke from the Raj piano lounge to the Sportsman's Lodge to the main bar filled with Swing and Big Band music, and the sounds of Lou Rawls and Natalie Cole (in person).

The new kid on the block: Rix (from the people who brought you Jones). The mood is more Don the Beachcomber than English library, but cigars reign, along with fine ports, cognacs, and rums luxurious enough to be sipped. At the Patio Tiki Bar, try a Velvet Fog with a medley that includes Finlandia and Blue Curaçao. It arrives on dry ice with two straws and looks like lagoon water. Don't worry about what else is in it—it's great, just like its namesake, Mel Tormé.

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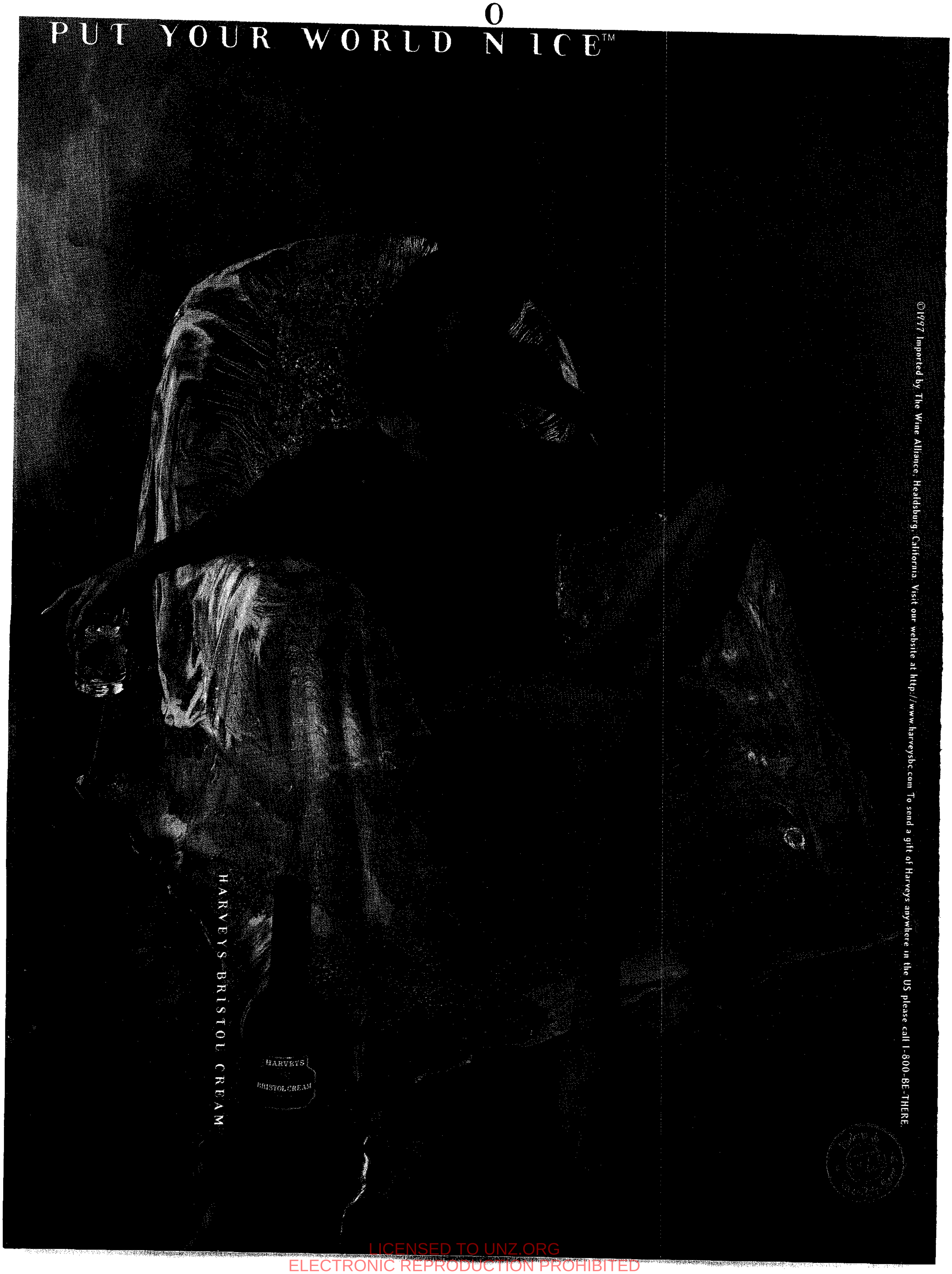
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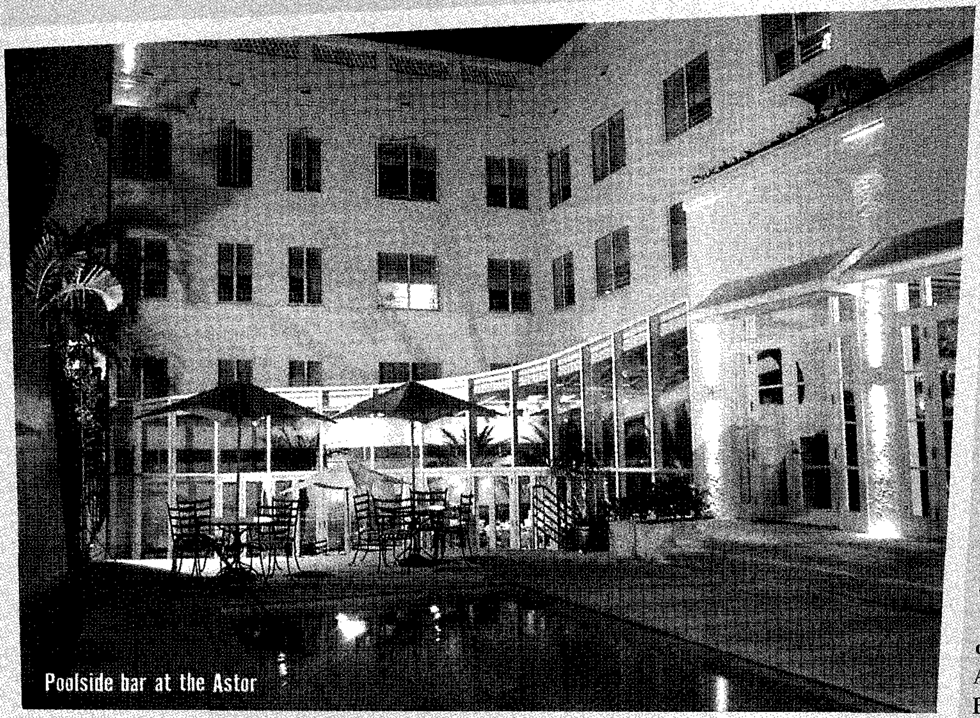
BRING ON THE NIGHT

# South Beach



Poolside bar at the Astor

Mel Victor

South Beach has two seasons: on and off. "On" is neon-bright, a mix of models and movie stars that lights up the winter night like the city's deco skyline. Naturally, it all begins with a drink. At Ian Schrager's see-and-be-scene Rose Bar in the Delano Hotel, order anything pastel—rosé wine from Provence, a curaçao-tinted Blue Door Martini, or a made-from-scratch piña colada—and "you'll go perfectly with the surroundings," says manager Stephan Meier. "Most people dress in white or black. The upholstery is white. Pastel drinks work with the art deco colors of South Beach."

At the sleek poolside bar of the Hotel Astor, "ask for me," says Arturo, who will tell you all about the Black Tie Martini he invented (a drop of Campari and a drop of Chivas Regal smoothes out the gin or vodka).

At the celeb-filled China Grill, the word is sake, and no wonder. It's infused with strawberrry and melon, pineapple and orange juice, garlic and rosemary, and, not surprisingly, isn't like anything you've tasted before. Sample one at the bar and then stroll across the street to the new Red Square, a caviar-and-vodka bar with a twist: dancing.

If the night is still young (and in South Beach it always is), make your way over to the overstuffed Living Room at the Strand to Bash with its Euro crowd. After midnight, one of Miami's best dance clubs, GrooveJet, is an oasis that hops until dawn.

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Lift a glass. The cocktail revolution is on.

Pastel drinks work with the art deco colors of the district and its surroundings.

GrooveJet

Martini at the Raleigh

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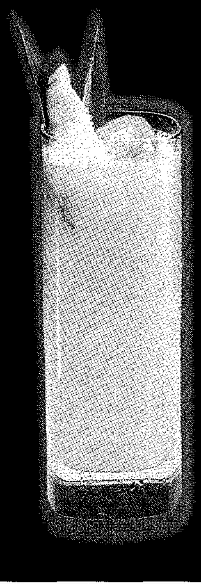

# BEHIND THE BAR:

**SAZERAC**
**(Bruno's, San Francisco)**
One cup of ice, two ounces Jim Beam rye whiskey, one-quarter ounce simple syrup, three dashes each of Angostura bitters, Peychaud's; stir and strain

**ROB ROY**
**(Bix, San Francisco)**
One and a half ounces Glenfiddich Scotch, half ounce M&R sweet vermouth, dash of Angostura bitters; shake well, cherry garnish

**KIR ROYALE**
**(Narcisse, Chicago)**
Half ounce Chambord; top glass off with Taittinger's champagne; two cassis-soaked cherries as a garnish

**THE BANANA KARENINA**
**(Narcisse, Chicago)**
Two ounces Smirnoff vodka, one ounce banana liqueur, a splash of Godet; shake well thirty times, serve with a wedge of banana in a chilled ten-ounce martini glass

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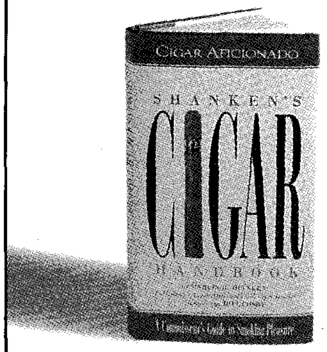

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### COSMOPOLITAN
**(Club Macanudo, NY)**

One and a half ounces Absolut Citron, one ounce Cointreau, half ounce lime juice, dash of cranberry juice, lemon twist (optional); shake and pour into a chilled martini glass

### THE PERFECT MARTINI
**(Rainbow Room, NY)**

Two and a half ounces of Beefeater Dry Gin, dash of sweet and dry vermouth; pour into ice-filled mixing glass, then into martini glass; olive or lemon twist garnish

BRING ON
THE NIGHT

# THE MIXMASTERS' PICKS

### SIDECAR
**(Restaurant Zinc, Boston)**

Three ounces Hennessy V.S.O.P., half ounce Cointreau, two ounces fresh lime juice; shake vigorously in a chilled shaker, strain and pour straight up into a Tupelo brown sugar-rimmed martini glass, orange slice garnish

### PURPLE MARTINI
**(Biba, Boston)**

Two and a half ounces Bombay Sapphire gin, half ounce Elysium (black muscat dessert wine in lieu of vermouth); chilled, shaken, and served

### BUTTERFLY'S KISS
**(Bar Marmont, LA)**

Two and a half ounces of Skyy vodka, half ounce Frangelico into Pernod-coated glass; lemon twist garnish

### TRINQUEMALLE
**(Le Colonial, LA)**

One ounce Myers rum (Original Dark), one ounce Bacardi light rum, two dashes grenadine, splash of fresh lime juice and fresh orange juice; shake and float with Bacardi 151, serve in a Pilsner glass with one cup of ice

### THE ROSE MARGARITA
**(Rose Bar, South Beach)**

One and a half ounces Silver Patrón tequila, dash of Cointreau, simple syrup, and freshly squeezed lime, half ounce cranberry juice; blend with one cup of ice; lime garnish

### PEACH SPARKLER
**(China Grill, South Beach)**

One and a third ounces Finlandia vodka, half ounce Peach Schnapps, two ounces orange juice, two ounces Taittinger's champagne

Photos (left to right) courtesy of FPG International, Hennessy, Bushmills, Patrón.

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"Do you have information about robberies, homicides, guns, arson, hate crimes, chop shops, terrorism?" I've had people say, "Chop-chop? What chop-chop?" But when George's turn came he said, "Yes," "Yes," "Yes," "Yes," "No," "Yes," and "What was the last one?"

As it turned out, my prisoner was the Rosetta stone to scores of violent felonies, past and planned. George told us that people approached him to do hits and robberies almost every week. The narcotics king of Atlanta wanted to open night clubs in the city, for dancing and dealing, and had been asking George to run them. A robbery at a bodega was supposed to take place a few hours from now, and he knew the two guys who had planned it, what kind of gun they'd carry, how they knew the owner's brother, a pockmarked Dominican who carried a .357, and how he was the one to watch, to take out if he moved. One of the two had robbed a meat market a few months ago of five thousand dollars, with at least a grand in food stamps, which they moved through a Chinese restaurant. Most important, he knew about another planned hit—on a Brazilian man, a witness in a state case. He wouldn't say more.

It was as if George spread the deck and asked the detective to pick a card, any card—but only one. The detective chose the robbery planned for that night. The exchange was remarkably businesslike: if the bodega robbery occurred and arrests were made quickly, that would be good; if it could be prevented, that would be even better; and either result should be enough to secure George freedom. Though it seemed shabby, and even dangerous, to bargain Toni's distress against the safety of a grocery store, it was just that—a bargain. What was left unmentioned was that George would, in all likelihood, be freed by the judge at his arraignment. Toni's case was weak, even terminal, and if history served as a guide the charges might well be dropped. (I had even found the cop who'd witnessed Toni's threats to have George arrested if he left her.) But George was back in the cage now, and he would do what he could to get out of it. It was a line of thought we encouraged.

As calls were made, and the hours passed, George explained that he had no problem giving up people who weren't close friends and who were going to hurt people. He had hurt people himself, and, while it didn't keep him up at night, he thought it a better thing if people didn't get hurt during jobs. George's efforts at moral understanding had a rote, calisthenic quality: "You think, What if it's your brother, your girl who gets shot in a holdup—how would you feel?" What really bothered him was that here he had information of great value, and he'd had to squander it on an domestic-violence charge. "I'm not gonna say all I know," he told me. "What if they grab me with a gun sometime, what am I gonna have left to give?"

It was after dark by now, and the bodega would be open for only a few more hours. There were countless reasons for the robbery not to take place then: a hangover, a date, the flu, an argument, a bad horoscope, or an arrest. The next night was Halloween, when the robbers could even wear masks without attracting notice. The detective passed the information to the borough robbery squad and sent us on our way to Central Booking.

The password had been spoken, but the gates remained shut. I hadn't quite expected that, and neither had George. This meant that he would have to spend the night with the losers, with their foul smells and sad stories, their tough-guy sneers and choked-back sobs. As I put him in the holding cell, George leaned close to me and whispered that he wanted to talk. "About the Brazilian?" I asked. "About the Brazilian," he said. I loved that part; it was just like the movies. As they say, this is no job for a grownup.

There may be no crime more destructive to the criminal-justice system than a hit on a witness: if witnesses won't work, the system doesn't. For several hours, I pursued district attorneys and detectives to peddle my murder conspiracy, but there didn't seem to be a buyer. After midnight, I went home, determined to keep trying in the morning.

TONI arrived at court in the morning looking fresh and rested, and she remained resolute in her desire to press charges. When we were finished, I was taken aback at the vehemence of the assistant D.A.'s reaction. "Did you see that poor woman? I've never seen such fear!" she

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Take away these eyes, little colored stones,
this totem of a nose, these lips that know
all the multiplication tables and a fine selection of poems.
I give you my whole face, tongue and hair included,
I'll rip out my nails and teeth to complete the package.

These ways of feeling
won't do. Neither the eyes nor the fingers.
Nor those warmed-up leftovers, memories,
nor kindness, like an evil little parakeet.
Take the inductive reasonings and the racks
where the washed and ironed words are hanging.
Ransack the whole house, everything out,
leave me like a hole or a stump.

Possibly then, when God, that Boy Scout,
and his benevolence are worthless to me,
and I'm no better than some rug that's put up
with its steady drizzle of shoes for eighty years
and there's nothing left but the warp, a see-through skeleton
whose silver peacocks have been worn away,

it could be, without my voice, I'll be able to say your name,
it could happen, without my hands, I'll be able to reach your waist.

—JULIO CORTÁZAR

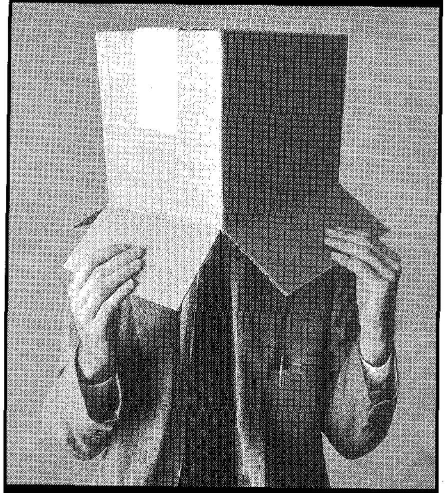
*(Translated, from the Spanish, by Stephen Kessler.)*

said. "I really want to put this guy away!" She had tears in her eyes.

Ordinarily, I would have been delighted with the response. Time after time, I've brought in assault cases, from domestic violence more often than not, and seen them dealt down to next to nothing. At last, I'd met a blazing champion of the downtrodden, and it couldn't have happened at a worse time. My peculiar mixture of motives made me uneasy, but I genuinely felt that her reaction was naïve and awry. There are times when my heart breaks for people; this wasn't one of them.

After Toni signed the complaint, I spoke to another supervising D.A., who sent me to another detective. This time, however, the detective reacted as I hoped, saying that we had to move, immediately, and do whatever possible to get to the Brazilian. But when I retrieved George from his holding cell, it looked as if the case had, again, fallen apart. He'd barely slept or eaten, and he was talking in crazy circles, saying that he could go back to jail and wouldn't care, and then that he'd never go back because he hadn't done anything. Once, he broke down—crying, with his face in his hands—and I thought we had lost him. We moved between paying him sympathetic attention and allowing him moments of privacy; we fed him; we let him call his sister to talk. "Think about your children!" I said. Let me tell you, we were ruthless. Finally, he came around and told us what he knew.

George didn't know if the Brazilian had testified or was scheduled to; if he was an informant or was just suspected of thinking about turning. The Brazilian ran narcotics for another dealer, who was in prison; the dealer suspected that his employee had betrayed him, and had ordered the hit. The fee would be six thousand dollars—half on agreement, half on completion. George also knew the name and address of the Brazilian, because he'd seen a video as a kind of prospectus for the hit: footage of the block, the apartment building, the apartment. In the last ten seconds, the Brazilian himself appeared in the video, stumbling unsuspectingly into the frame on his way home. All this George knew



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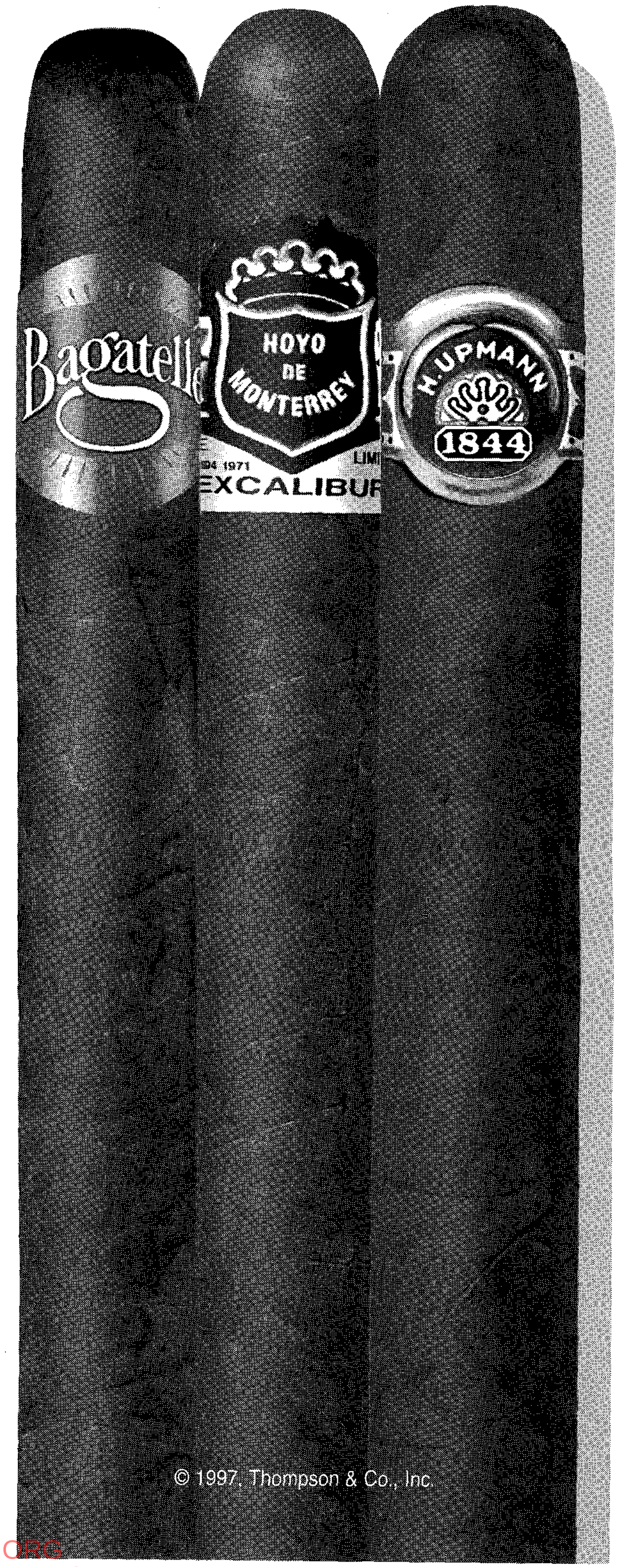

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because he had been asked to do the hit.

Throughout the afternoon and into the evening, we worked on the deal. The D.A. wanted to know if anyone could I.D. the Brazilian as a witness or an informant; calls went back and forth between cops and prosecutors, word went up the chains of command, across agencies and jurisdictions. We were determined to prevent a murder, but the D.A., in particular, was terrified of another one, whose headline would read, "D.A. FREES PAROLEE, GIRLFRIEND SLAIN." He had Toni brought back in, to see for himself how she felt, how badly she was hurt, and if she was afraid.

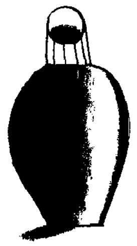
George would not give the Brazilian's name without a promise from the D.A. that he himself would be out, today. The D.A. eventually agreed that it would be enough if the name checked out. George gave up the first name, which was all he remembered anyway—Kari. With this shred of evidence, the detectives started calling around and reporting back to us whatever they turned up.

"The D.E.A. has a Bosnian named Kiri, wants to know if it's your guy."

"F.B.I. has a Corio, from Naples."

"Naples, Florida, or Naples, Italy? Never mind, forget it, but keep taking anything close—Brazilian Kari might be Jamaican Kelly after how many guys are passing along the name."

By sundown, there had been no confirmation, but the D.A. agreed to let George out that night, in exchange for the Brazilian's address, with the stipulation that he accept the terms of the order of protection, enter a batterer's program, and agree to bring them the videotape the next morning. George gave an address in Manhattan, and a half hour later D.E.A. agents were on a cell phone from a car. No one was home, but neighbors confirmed that a Brazilian man lived there, and several said he was a drug dealer. They had a name. The Manhattan D.A. confirmed that he was a defendant in a drug case and a witness for the prosecution in a kidnapping: his own. The hit had been scheduled to take place that very night, it turned out, but the killers were spooked by the police presence.



And so it finally proved to be a good day's work, though not without its questions and compromises. A life was saved, by freeing the man who'd been asked to take it. The intended victim was the kind of person I'd just as soon arrest as rescue. But he was alive—at least for a little while longer—and George was his unlikely and reluctant savior.

George picked up his life more or less where he left off. Toni decided to drop the charges, and Jocelyn became pregnant by him again: "Gotta keep trying till I get a son," he said. Every week or so, I still run into George on the street, and we say hello. I like him, as far as it goes. The feeling is as mutual as it can be, I think, between two people who wouldn't hesitate to shoot each other. As he's a hit man and I'm a cop, the odds of such an occurrence are less remote than they might be otherwise.

IT was near the end of my tour of duty, and I was headed back to the precinct when an aided case came over the air. Aideds are among the most frequent jobs, usually entailing an escort of E.M.S. workers to the scene of an illness or injury. When I arrived in the apartment, I could tell from the smell why someone had called. As I walked down the hall, past what seemed to be numerous, spacious rooms, the rank, ripe odor of decomposition grew stronger, and when an expressionless teen-age girl directed me to the last bedroom I was thrown less by the sight of the still, frail old Puerto Rican woman in bed than the four emergency medical technicians working around her. Two were crying.

The old woman was naked, lying face down, stuck to plastic sheets that made a crackling sound as she was unpeeled from them. She had once been a hefty woman but now looked less slimmed down than deflated: her breasts were empty, pressed against her chest, and the bones of her hips and thighs were plainly visible, draped with loose, lifeless skin. Maggots crawled on her, inchworming along, and popping off like broken watch springs. There was rodent excrement in the bed with her, and one E.M.T., examining her legs, said, with a horrified intake of breath, "Those are rat bites! Whoever did this to her should go to jail!"

The old woman let out a breathy moan as she was rolled over, feeling pain wherever her body was alive. This woman was dying; parts of her were already dead. And she didn't live alone. I turned away, and went to talk to the teen-age girl: "Who takes care of this lady?"

"Well," she said, with a pouty, long-suffering tone, "I'm the one who does most of the work."

"Who lives here? How old are they?"

"Me and my sister and my grandmother. My sister's twenty-three, but she's out now."

"Can you tell me why you didn't feed her?"

"She said she wasn't hungry."

"Why didn't you call a doctor?"

"I'm the one that did."

"Before now, why didn't you call?"

"My mom said not to."

She said that her mother lived in another part of the city. I told her to call her and tell her to go to the hospital. I asked what they lived on, and she said her grandmother got checks and her sister cashed them to run the household. Ordinarily, E.M.S. prefers to have a relative ride in the ambulance with the aided, but when the teen-ager approached the door a no-longer-crying E.M.T. told her, curtly, "You want to visit Grandma? Take the bus."

Back at the precinct, it took some time to figure out how to write the complaint—for, while there are many laws regarding the care of children, the elderly are less explicitly protected. I found a misdemeanor in the Penal Law called "Endangering the welfare of an incompetent person," and named the adult sister and the mother as perpetrators. Since there were checks coming in, "Investigate larceny" was added. And that, I realized, without satisfaction, explained the family's nearly homicidal neglect. The old woman was the keystone of a tidy edifice of subsidies: a large apartment, Social Security, welfare for the teen-age girl. If she went to a hospital or a nursing home, all these benefits would vanish from their pockets. People talk about living from paycheck to paycheck; this family almost let a woman die that way.

EVERY cop has his gripes and jokes, his epics and anecdotes about life on the job. I grew up hearing them. My great-grandfather was a sergeant, in Brooklyn: a dapper, dangerous figure from the Jazz Age who became Mayor Jimmy Walker's driver. My father was a police officer—briefly, before moving on to federal law enforcement, a law degree, and an M.B.A.—and his brother was a police officer for thirty-three years. My father died before I went on the job, but I think that my decision to become a cop would strike him as an affront to how far we've come from the hardscrabble west of Ireland and the docks of Hell's Kitchen. For the next generation to pound a beat might mean that his grandchildren would not try cases in the Supreme Court but instead make their livelihood digging potatoes with a stick by the crossroads outside Ballinrobe. Ah, acushla machree.

Now, after a few years on the job, I have my own war stories. On weekends, I'll sit back, lift up my feet, and tell my girlfriend, "I took a bullet out of a lady's living room. It must have been shot from Jersey. It went through the glass, and stopped on the sill. It landed there like a sparrow." Or "I talked a runaway into coming home. She was fourteen years old. All I had to do was tell her I'd lock up her boyfriend's whole family if she didn't." At times, the point of the job seems to be to make it home with an intact skin and a good story. The stories are a benefit, like the dental plan.

And you need them, like your handcuffs or your vest, to control events when you have to, and to cover your back. If you're a cop, you need a quick tongue, to tell the victim, the perp, the crowd, the sergeant, the D.A., the judge, and the jury what you're doing, what you did, and why. Are you ready to make a statement? No? Then you just did. You told me you weren't ready. "Police were unprepared to answer," says the lead in the morning paper. Or the gossip in the locker room, or the word on the street.

I also hear more than my share of stories. And so, aside from the odd Christmas party or fund-raiser, I don't hang out with cops from the precinct. My friends who are cops were friends of mine before I went on the job. And most of the people I see regularly have nothing at all to do with police work. The job has enough of me. For five days a week, I stay off the streets unless I'm working them. And when I'm not in uniform I'd just as soon not see blue.

But I also notice that when I'm out on weekends and there's another cop there—at a wedding or a cookout or a club—I'll often spend most of the time talking with him. There are things you've done and places you've been that no one else has had to do or see in quite the same way. ♦

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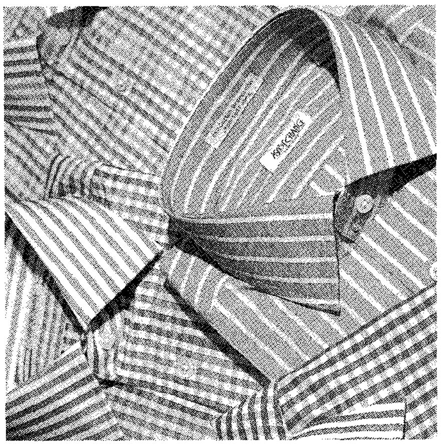

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THE ART WORLD

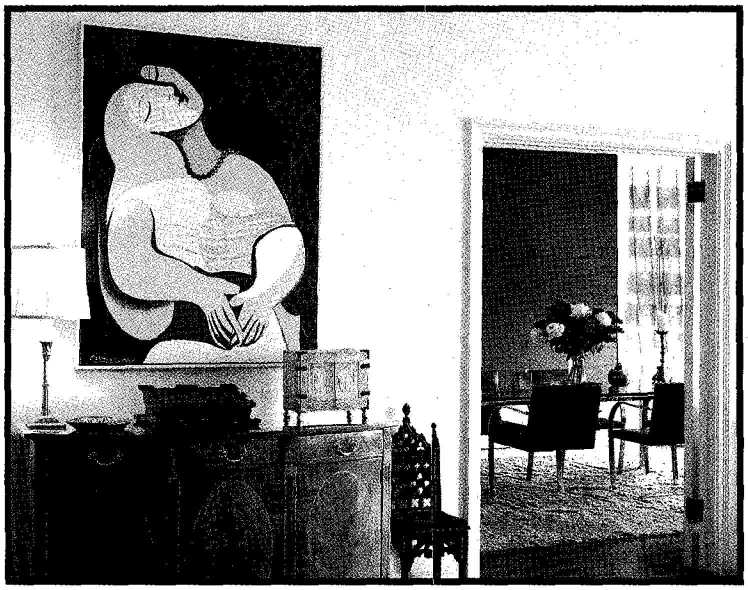
# ACCIDENTAL AFFAIR

*One of the century's greatest collections goes up for sale.*

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

It would have embarrassed Victor and Sally Ganz no end to know that their collection—the part of it, at any rate, that will be sold at Christie's on November 10th—is expected to bring more than a hundred and twenty-five million dollars, and that Christie's is calling it the greatest private collection of twentieth-century art ever offered at auction. That was hardly the point. Sally said once, "I hate the idea of collecting. We never started out—and this is absolutely crucial—to make a collection."

They bought their first painting together in December of 1941, two weeks before they were married. Victor, who grew up in a comfortable New York Jewish household, had been going around to art galleries for years, but until then he had bought only three pictures: two small watercolors, one by Jules Pascin and one by Louis Eilshemius, and a large oil painting by Raphael Soyer. (He eventually got rid of the Soyer.) Sally, a Louisville, Kentucky, girl who had worked her way up from salesgirl at Macy's to perfume buyer at Bonwit Teller, was game for anything in those days—and kept right on being so until she died, early this year, at the age of eighty-five. Their art life really began on that December day when Victor and Sally went into the Paul Rosenberg Gallery, on Fifty-seventh Street, and saw a painting by Picasso called "The Dream." Painted ten years earlier, it showed Picasso's young mistress Marie-Thérèse Walther asleep in an armchair, her head resting on one bare shoulder, a string of beads tracing the violet contours of her neck and chest. Informed by Rosenberg that the painting belonged to Mary Callery, a well-off American sculptor, and that she might be willing to sell it, Victor wasted no time. He and Sally visited Callery, paid the asking price (five thousand dollars), and came away with one of the most erotic and indelible images Picasso ever painted.



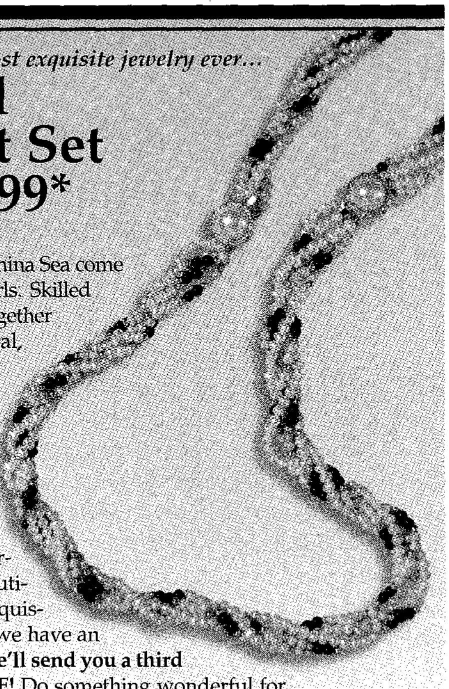
*The Ganzes' infatuation with Picasso developed into a twenty-year buying spree. "The Dream" in their apartment. Photographed by Eric Boman.*

For the next twenty years, the Ganzes concentrated their buying exclusively on Picasso. They bought paintings, sculptures, drawings, and prints, more often than not the most difficult, the most powerful, and, not coincidentally, the most important works of their chosen master. "It was like a love affair," Victor once told me. "I was literally infatuated with the man." They met Picasso soon after the war, by a prearranged chance, in a bookstore in Golfe Juan; the artist was so charmed by them both that he asked them to join his lunch party at a nearby restaurant. They never presumed on the acquaintance, and three decades passed before they saw him again. Meanwhile, they kept on buying his work. Again and again, Victor sold a lesser Picasso to buy a greater one, or else borrowed the money from the bank; his income from the family costume-jewelry business, which he took over and ran, was never big enough to finance his art buying.

In the early nineteen-sixties, when Picassos got too expensive, Victor and Sally zeroed in on a small group of young American artists. Skipping the Abstract Expressionists, they bought the work of Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, Eva Hesse, and a few others, buying in depth and with an unerring eye for the difficult, ungratiating pieces—Rauschenberg's "Rebus," Johns's "Diver," Stella's "Polish Village" series. These artists became their friends, and were invited often to the Ganzes' duplex apartment, at 10 Gracie Square, where the phenomenal paintings on the walls were on relaxed terms with the comfortable chairs and sofas and the silver-framed photographs of Ganz children and grandchildren on every available flat surface. ("I like the way the Ganzes do it," Johns said once. "I like the way they put the table lamps in front of the pictures.") The excitement of being in those rooms was like the excitement of a love affair, full of thrilling discoveries as well as familiar enchantments.

The Ganzes were the largest private lenders to the 1980 Picasso retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, and also to the Stella retrospective there in 1987, the year Victor died. William Rubin, for many years MOMA's director of painting and sculpture, walked through the Picasso show with Victor and Sally. "Our conversation about various pictures made me realize how extraordinarily acute Victor's eye was," he said later. "His hunger to study these objects, combined with the quality of his judgment, made me feel that even if there were only a couple of Victor Ganzes in the world, they alone made the curator's efforts worthwhile."

Conducted at that level, buying art approaches the adventure of making it. ♦



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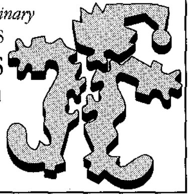

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### ANNALS OF DOMESTICITY

# THE RUNAWAY MOTHER

*A short history of the stranger who is looking after your children.*

BY STACY SCHIFF

MY children lead fairy-tale lives in one respect: they have a generally absent mother. In this they are hardly alone. On our street at midafternoon, one finds oneself asking the same question that drifts to mind halfway through a children's story: Where are all the mothers? We are more readily accounted for than most of our literary counterparts; some of us are only a phone call away. But the fact remains that at the center of our children's lives are women who may just as well have blown in with the east wind. Little is on the side of the working mother, but—for entirely accidental, wholly apolitical reasons—the literature is.

MAIRA KALMAN

From the Victorian Age comes this advice to the makers of children's tales: Dismiss all the mothers. The mother is, at best, the great heavy of children's literature, the ultimate bad cop. Confining her to the wings is an essential early step of the genre. Could a John Ford movie open without a man and his past walking into town? Would Eloise be pouring water down the mail chute at the Plaza if her mother could be reached on the house phone?

If offstage is good, dead is better. Very dead is best, as is the case with Pippi Longstocking, who had had a mother "so long ago that Pippi didn't remember her at all." From the point of view of children's literature, the dead mother is the good mother. (Nabokov extended this observation to all of literature. "The good mother nurses a dead child or dies herself," he noted when he lectured on Dickens.) Death is certainly a neater solution than an eternal bridge game, where a great number of fictional mothers appear to have congregated.

Clouds of absent-mindedness obscure the parents still loitering around the edges of children's literature. Mrs. Banks, better known as Mary Poppins's employer, is familiar to many of us: she is distracted, overwhelmed, a stranger in her own home. This is something her husband makes perfectly clear at the outset, when he advises her on how to go about replenishing the staff: "I should get somebody to put in the *Morning Paper* the news that Jane and Michael and John and Barbara Banks (to say nothing of their Mother) require the best possible Nannie at the lowest possible wage and at once." That line was written by a woman, P. L. Travers, but it took a man, in Hollywood—you can still hear the guffawing in the conference room—to explain away Mrs. Banks's distraction by making her a suffragette. If Mrs. Banks were a little less dizzy, she might have noticed that the new hire was spooning an unidentified, unstable potion into the mouths of her children. She might have turned to see someone zooming up the bannister behind her.

Enter the nanny, the babysitter, the au pair, the child-care provider, the nonbiological caregiver. In literature, she is by definition more available than the bridge-playing (or the bridge-building) mother. Also by definition she is easier to love. She may be magical, but she is completely real. She knows what to ask and how to listen. Harriet M. Welsch, a.k.a. Harriet the Spy, never shouts at the supreme Ole Golly—"maybe because she never got the feeling with Ole Golly that she did with her parents that they never heard anything." Louise Fitzhugh's Harriet lives for her reconnaissance work, a backhanded tribute, perhaps, to her incurious Upper East Side parents. When her classmates discover her highly incriminating secret notebook, it is Ole Golly who outlines Harriet's options: You apologize, or you lie. In order for Mary Poppins to say the right things, Mrs. Banks has to say the wrong things, and she reliably does.

The children in literature have caregivers for all kinds of reasons: The mothers may be dead, or they may just as often be upper class and British. Occasionally, a mother is at her office, which is why Mrs. Wilson, in "Bed-Knob and Broomstick," happens not to notice that her children are flying around London with a witch-in-training. The Darlings of "Peter Pan" fame have a nanny for the most fashionable of reasons: the need to impress the neighbors—a bid they rather undermine in hiring a Newfoundland for the job. Children in literature have nannies primarily for one reason, really: so that someone will understand. Lord knows parents don't.

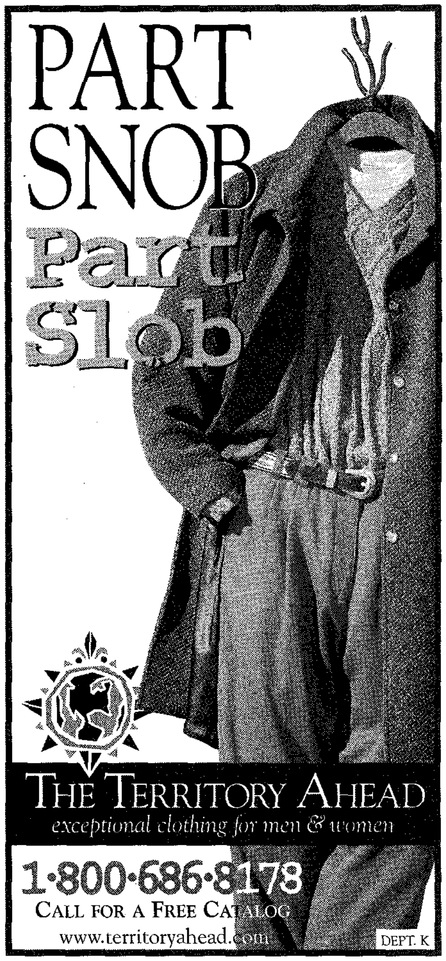
Children's stories are escapist fantasies intended for those held under house arrest, ostensibly for their own good. For small children to be protagonists in tales of great adventure, they need to be relieved of their protectors; they need to be home alone, or at least half alone. Children simply don't venture down rabbit holes with the people who gave birth to them in tow. In literature, children fly as we fly in dreams: they fly on fourposter beds; they fly on laughing gas, on spinning compasses, on fairy dust; they fly in restored race cars; they fly on carpets; they fly on the hot breath of a Christlike lion; they fly in houses caught in Kansas cyclones. But they never fly when their mothers are around.

Why Pippi Longstocking doesn't have a nanny is a lingering cause for concern in our household; why she doesn't have a mother is an issue that no one has raised. And yet to my absences my children remain perfectly, painfully attuned. Often the first question of the morning is "Who is putting us to bed tonight?" I don't know that this is more than a housekeeping matter, however, a token protest. Maybe they sense that it will hurt my feelings if, when I stray to the end of the town, they fail to notice. In any event, once the issue has been decided it is rarely a cause for further discussion. There may be some reason for this: inevitably, when my husband and I come home we find that someone has got away with fifth-degree murder. Someone has inveigled the sitter into letting him sleep on the floor, with all his bedding; someone else has slipped three dresses on over her fully accessorized pajamas. It is not that we are less lenient but that, with us out of the house, they will venture to places they would not otherwise have gone. They will wander away from storm shelters, slip through wardrobes. It is almost as if they had to banish us to begin to express themselves. Separation, Freud held, begins with the first secret. And the first tale-spinning begins here, too: the morning explanations for these late-night eccentricities are riotously funny. What we hear is rarely the truth, but it is consistently fascinating. (Why, exactly, were the additional layers of clothing necessary? "Because I had to travel a long distance in the night," the four-year-old responds brightly. And the bathing suit? "But, Mama, there are oceans on other planets, too.") We know less than we might like about these small people's lives, but we know a great deal about their imaginations. Had I been what a voice inside me persists in believing is the good mother—had I spent the day with my children, and the night—the opposite would be true. The narrative line begins running when the door is closed, as it did for those original latchkey children, ably assisted by the Cat in the Hat.

My mother went back to work a few months before I turned three. Or so she insists: my memory tells me that she never stopped working save to take a sabbatical, which she spent at her desk in the basement, a room I was repeatedly ushered out of. Upstairs, waiting for me—or at the bus stop waiting for me, or at her doorstep waiting for me—was Mrs. Ciempa. The Ciempas lived several doors away, in an imposing three-story farmhouse that predated the rest of our low-lying neighborhood by a good fifty years. And the truth of the matter is that nearly all the irregular, illicit, memorable things that I did as a child I did with Mrs. Ciempa. Everything that was proscribed, exotic, spoken of in halting, hushed tones was sitter-sponsored. My otherwise tight-lipped brother waxes rhapsodic on the subject of the illuminated crucifix in the Ciempas' master bedroom, the TV dinners in front of "Perry Mason." This was living: this was the children of liberal Jewish academics' version of Narnia.

Everything Mrs. Ciempa touched glinted with fairy dust. That she was a fading beauty in homemade clothes, the mother of four grown children, and probably all of five feet tall when she wasn't hunched over an ironing board had nothing to do with my reality. She was flawless, she was fascinating, she was infallible. The world got bigger when I was with her. Despite all fears of abandonment, my brother and I lived for the times our parents were away, when we were moved into the Ciempas' home, a home that smelled of something—cooking? cigarettes? Our house had no smell—maybe, my brother suggests, because no one was ever there. And our house was absurdly light, whereas the Ciempas' was an enchanted forest of shadows—dark except for the light above the stove, the flicker of the television in the next room. I could have spent my life on Mr. Ciempa's Barcalounger; if I did not, it was only because my brother was a bully and because, eventually, my parents did come home. Then we would head across the two lawns that separated our house from the Ciempas'. We had to squirm around the end post of the fence that bordered our property; I remember mentally changing gears as I scraped past the lilac bushes. I was back in the realm where the missteps came easily; where the adults asked the wrong questions and then failed to listen to the answers; where the ordinary was—well, ordinary.

Did I feel abandoned? Sometimes. I couldn't have felt unloved; I knew how the divine Mrs. Ciempa felt about me from the chill with which her own children received me. Did I deploy every device in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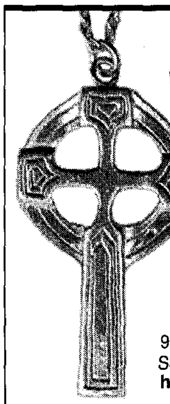
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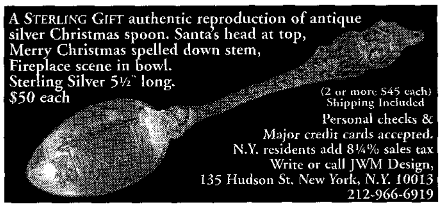
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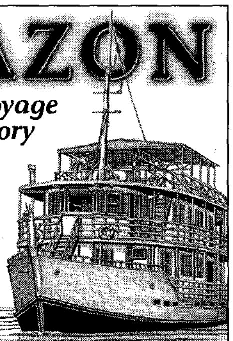

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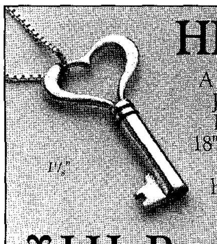

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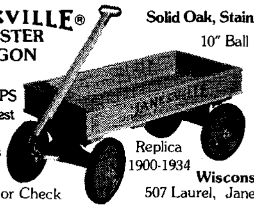

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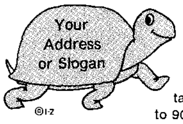

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my well-stocked arsenal to claim my parents' attention? Absolutely. But I wanted to *live* with Mrs. Ciempa: I imagined a life of blue Popsicles and "Dark Shadows." I imagined an adult to whom I could say anything I wanted, because she had no particular expectations of me and had more of an investment in my happiness than in my potential. Mrs. Ciempa knew how to discipline, but the words of disappointment, the reports of my failures, the terms of the punishment were dictated at a different address.

MRS. CIEMPA'S car was voluptuous and American. Ours was boxy and European. A few times each week, Mrs. Ciempa and I aimed that huge hulk of a car downtown, to a building I would not otherwise have known existed. My home town was a once-thriving mill town that had long since fallen on hard times; at what had once been the center of town stood a stucco building with a gabled roof, the train depot in a place where the trains no longer stopped. For what seemed hours on end, we waited there for Mr. Ciempa, whom we eventually drove home, because—I never thought to ask why—Mr. Ciempa did not drive. Nor did he work. Nor did he dress before noon, which must have been about when he headed downtown—to this part of town which Mrs. Ciempa seemed to have conjured out of thin air but was in fact just the flip side of the main street.

At what age did I figure out what that depot was? I have a vague recollection of reading in the car with Mrs. Ciempa, but never of leaving the car. Mostly what I retain is my delight in our special assignment: I didn't know what, exactly, our mission was—we were two admirals with sealed orders—but I did know that there was something illicit, important about it, probably for no other reason than that my parents didn't frequent this address, which I assumed was invisible, or, at least, inaccessible, to them. What did they think of these excursions? Not very much, since I don't appear to have mentioned them. At some point later in my childhood, my mother confided that she believed Mr. Ciempa to have been relieved of his driver's license after an episode of drunken driving. But it is only today that I ask, "Didn't it bother you that Mrs. Ciempa took me with her in the afternoons to pick up Mr. Ciempa at the bar?" My mother smiles. "I knew you were in good hands," she says and, once again, unforgivably, she is right.

Her faculty meetings distracted her less than did Mrs. Banks's appointments; I can't imagine that she was oblivious of the spells under which her children were falling. If nothing else, she knew of the "Dark Shadows" afternoons, about which we blathered endlessly. I think my mother cottoned, far more quickly than I have, to the fact that once a certain comfort level has been established there is a limit to what you want to know about how your children spend their time in the hands of the person to whom you have entrusted them. And there is a limit to what the children want to tell: the adventures are theirs. Certainly I never told my parents about an "errand" Mrs. Ciempa and I ran, perhaps no more than once, but that seems to embrace my entire childhood. I sat alone in the redolent nave of St. Stanislas Kostka Church while, twenty yards away, the person who most fascinated me in the world talked to a wall. Mrs. Ciempa allowed me to do what children's tales do, to live in two places at once: one familiar and snug, the kind you want to run from; the other foreign and dangerous, the kind that underlines the necessity of the first.

The sitter represents the child's first brush with relativity: Suddenly a different set of answers obtains, a different logic prevails. There is more than one way to make a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich. Further, the sitter is dealing with someone else's progeny, whom she treats with an added degree of respect. This is the very appreciation that children in stories think their parents need to learn, the lesson they intend to teach when they move into the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as the irreproachable Claudia Kincaid does in E. L. Konigsburg's "From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler." Mrs. Ciempa did not have to love me, but she did. And I must have known that I could not afford to be as careless with that affection as I could be with my parents' unconditional brand. The wayward Darling children are so secure in their mother's love that they delay the return home. They wager correctly that "they could afford to be callous for a bit longer."

AS every child well understands, nannies know more than parents. Claudia Kincaid is shocked that her parents don't know more about raising children, what with four of them in the house. One can't help thinking of Scapin and his commedia-dell'arte cohorts, forever arranging the affairs of people who ought to be able to do so for themselves. One can't help thinking of Winston Churchill at the deathbed of the wise Mrs. Everest, "my dearest and most intimate friend during the whole of the twenty years I had lived." Harriet knows that her mother isn't as smart as Ole Golly: if she wore a sign around her neck, it would read, "Child by Mrs. Welsch, wisdoms by Ole Golly." Mrs. Ciempa, too, had a handle on the weightier matters. She could listen. She knew what was important, which was rarely what my mother thought was important. Quietly, Mrs. Ciempa crocheted the absurd-looking sweater-vest that was de rigueur in the sixth grade, without which I was socially dead in the water—a fact that I could not seem to impress upon my highly fashionable, non-crocheting mother.

My six-year-old seems innately to know something about the wisdom of nannies and the limitations of parents. He is a great fan of Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle, Betty MacDonald's creation, who is able to step in where the bumbling, frustrated (nonworking) mothers fear to tread. The mothers are helpless, clueless, undone by their children and not taken overseriously by their husbands. If the child persists in playing with his food, the mother panics; Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle suggests the unorthodox but highly effective "Slow-Eater-Tiny-Bite-Taker-Cure." Recently in my son's presence I referred to these stories as children's books. "They are not children's books," he hastily corrected me. "They are instruction manuals for adults."

If fictional children need to be relieved of their mothers in order to experience adventure, the converse is true for the nonfictional mothers. I absent myself from my children's lives, as my mother did from mine, not because I want to promote their adventures or encourage their independence. I abandon these two small people, who have made me feel more attached to this world than I ever thought I would, because I need—and want—to work. The sitter makes both our sets of exploits possible. My mother could walk out the door in the morning, leaden briefcase of guilt in hand, and know that if the Cat in the Hat came by all would be back in order by the time she returned. From opposite sides and for different reasons, we viewed Mrs. Ciempa with a protean jumble of respect, devotion, wonder, and craven need. Mrs. Ciempa enhanced my life; she saved my mother's. She was our mutual liberation. She was right up there with Virginia Woolf's lock on the door and the five hundred pounds a year.

Here most dramatically life and literature part ways: from the fiction you would never guess that the life the sitter saves a hundred times a day is the mother's. When the nanny is heroic on the page or the screen, the life she saves time and again is the father's. In children's literature, fathers occupy a shadowy middle ground. Often they amount to the sum of their synecdochical parts: newspaper, smoking materials, commuter pass. By virtue of eccentricity, or casual permissiveness, fathers can be complicit in adventure in a way that mothers cannot: their tendency to take the kids out on the high seas five minutes before dinnertime is well established.

At the end of the day, this is what happens in the film versions of "Mary Poppins" and "The Sound of Music," those two great nanny infomercials. Julie Andrews works her magic as much on the fathers as on the children: Captain Von Trapp gains a wife and an accomplice, and a new lease on life; Mr. Banks's existence is turned upside down and inside out by this godsend of a nanny, who cures his humorlessness but not his wife's distractedness. Even Mr. Darling is transformed in "Peter Pan and Wendy": he is so sick with remorse for having mistreated Nana that—oblivious of what the neighbors might think—he moves into her kennel, in which he is daily transported to his office. The plots make no concessions to the mothers, who are, as Peter Pan points out, highly overrated.

The fictional mothers are guilt-free: if the lucky woman who gave birth to Eloise suffers pangs of regret, Kay Thompson isn't telling. My absence, on the other hand, remains a sticky thing—conspicuous, curious, negotiable, painful to at least one party. I worry that my children will remember me as having been as preoccupied as Mrs. Banks, if a little more available. But I also know that, when it comes to childhood, anti-romance has a habit of turning into romance. Is it possible that one day my children will remember the good-night embraces

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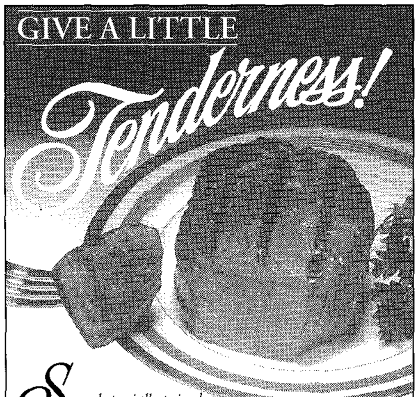

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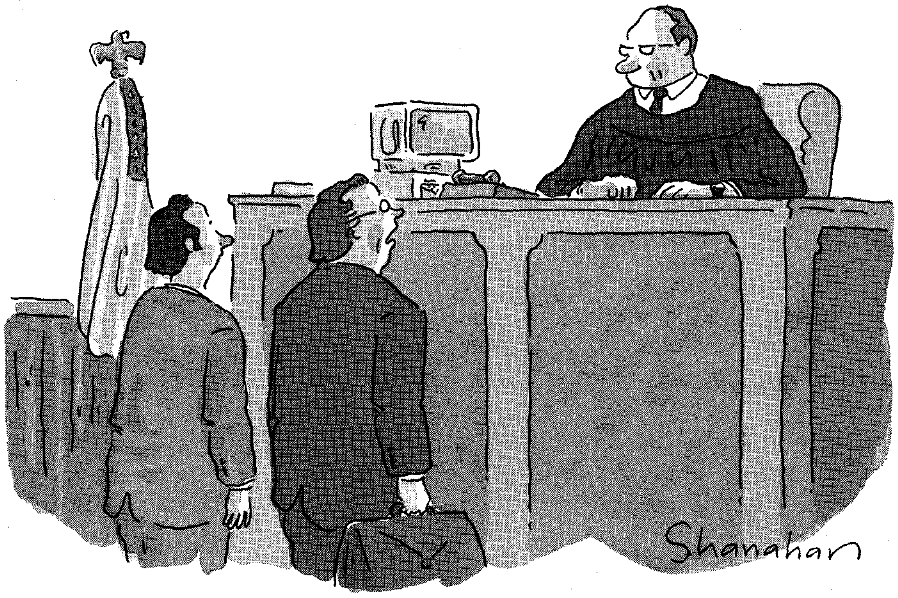
Children are miniature tabloids, after all. They have built-in radar for the things they shouldn't have heard, shouldn't have seen, for the out-of-whack. The sights you wish you could spare them are the ones you can practically see being imprinted indelibly on the little tablets in their brains. Remember the day the cat threw up on the breakfast table? Remember the day we were locked out of the apartment? Remember the day we slipped through a keyhole and spent the night at the Met and took our bed flying all over London and tamed the Wild Things? Remember the day—it all comes down to this—the adults were wrong?

MR. DARLING bursts into tears upon the return of his children: what with all the commotion, he has been made to feel like a cipher in his own home. Every working mother knows Mr. Darling's frustration, which is more potent in those cases where we have come to believe we have brought this on ourselves. We have an analogue in nature, but it is the exploitative cuckoo—the bird whose progeny take on the habits of their foster parents. What mother doesn't suffer remorse on hearing of the injury she couldn't tend to, the triumph she failed to witness? And yet what joy there is in watching these miniature people spread their wings, negotiate their arrangements with another adult. You *want* them to walk off confidently without you. Or at least you're meant to. You mean to adopt Ole Golly's sense of discretion—to learn which questions not to ask. If the Welsches and the Bankses know nothing of their children's lives, it is only partly because they fail to pay attention; it is also, as it should be, because the children have no desire to tell. Claudia Kincaid can go home with her head held high, because she has a secret, which has changed her.

If we real-life mothers have a secret, it is that this relay team we have assembled so that we might simultaneously love and work has about it all the grace of a three-legged race. Literature slips mercifully around the mother/nanny relationship, one that is not always pure enchantment. Could any mother be happy with her attempt to replicate herself, especially when the results are successful? When the results in our household have been less than perfect, we have wound up with the sitter who took it upon herself to inform the children that she did not believe in God; the sitter who professed her devotion even as she hired a lawyer to sue us; the sitter who assured our children that Coca-Cola has medicinal powers. (Did you think Mary Poppins was perfect? She can't provide references and barely manages to give a few minutes' notice.) From these experiences my children have concluded that adults are, sometimes, atheists, untrustworthy, misin-



*"Although my client was well aware of the falling crime rate, Your Honor, he chose not to be trendy."*

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formed. Did I want them to learn these lessons? Not particularly, but neither do I entirely mind. They won't glean these things from their books, which leave them with the mistaken belief that nannies are pure magic. And, for that matter, that the nanny is there for them.

The absent mother has another secret, too—an awkward, half-realized one. For a few minutes every day, our value soars, precisely because, like the Darling children, we have selfishly skipped off, "like the most heartless things in the world." We are not waiting at home for those unfeeling children to return from their exploits, as is the limp, much-maligned Mrs. Darling, a woman who J. M. Barrie tells us "had no proper spirit." We are not airing and re-airing the linen. And as much as we may chastise ourselves for it, we have actually done as the literature has directed us: we have banished ourselves from the magic kingdoms. Every day, we have a little practice in the most difficult part of this enterprise, the letting go, the part for which some of us have no natural aptitude, and we reap the reward on our return. But when it comes to sending the children off, we are all pathetic Mrs. Darlings, sunk low in our armchairs.

One mother claims the pivotal role in a children's tale precisely because she makes herself scarce: in "Disobedience," A. A. Milne delightfully turns the tables. The mother is at once absent and a cause for concern, but James James Morrison Morrison doesn't panic. He keeps a good, level head, more level than that of any mother who has ever lost sight of a child in an airport. Sometimes we play our roles best offstage, which allows the children, the heroes and heroines of the tale, to prove themselves, to extend themselves, to discover the world that in so many ways we don't want them to discover—at least, not in the rain, on empty stomachs, without their galoshes, in the company of strangers.

Would anyone have remembered James James Morrison Morrison's mother if she had stayed home? Plenty of us, racing frantically, quite of our own accord, are betting against it, and not just for poetry's sake. Sometimes the end of the town is just plain irresistible. Sometimes even a mother is frivolous enough to believe—against her better judgment and counter to all literary evidence—that she can get right down to the end of the town and be back in time for tea. ♦

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## A REPORTER AT LARGE

# DIGGING UP THE DEAD

*Some people in South Africa wanted to know what happened under apartheid so badly that they were prepared to grant amnesty to the regime's worst culprits simply to learn the truth. Was it worth it?*

### BY MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

IT is dark when I reach Nason Ndwandwe's suburban house, in Durban's Umlazi township. Nason is sitting on a low bench in his garage, with blackened engine parts scattered at his feet. He lights the first of many cigarettes, and we drink Crown beer, and he talks in a soft voice about his daughter, Phila. In a yellowed photograph he shows me of three girls in a high-school chemistry class, she is the remarkable one, with close-cropped hair, high cheekbones, shining brown skin, a distinctive thin, oval face, and a sharply intelligent gaze. She is about fifteen in the photograph. In the Zulu and Xhosa languages, *phila*—pronounced "pila"—means life.

Looking back now, Nason must wonder whether he ever really knew her. He had no idea that she had got involved in politics. In 1986, when she was at the university, studying to be a dental technician, the police put her on trial for a bombing near Durban a year earlier. She was acquitted, but not before they tried to get her to turn state's evidence. She refused, and on her acquittal she fled north to join the Spear of the Nation—Umkhonto we Sizwe, the African National Congress's guerrillas—which maintained bases across the border in Swaziland. After that, Nason heard more or less nothing—just a brief letter with a photograph of her squeezing her face up to an infant son.

In February, 1990, Nelson Mandela strode out of prison, and the comrades in Swaziland began returning home. Nason's daughter was not among them. He began hearing rumors that she had been seen in Zimbabwe, and also in Cape Town, using a new name and living with a new lover. Nason began to think that if she was alive there could be only one reason that she hadn't come home. There were guerrillas who had been turned, by torture or inducement, into accomplices of the apartheid regime: they had spied on activists in the townships, lured them to rendezvous with the police, and then participated in killings. They were known as *askaris*—Swahili for "guides." Apartheid could not have functioned without these *askaris:* black-on-black betrayal provided the information upon which the whole police system depended. Once you became an *askari*, there was no way back home.

Nason Ndwandwe wasn't politically active himself. As a biochemist with Lever Brothers, he couldn't afford to be. But the possibility that his daughter had betrayed her people was worse than the thought that she might be dead. In 1995, the Mandela government appointed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to establish the truth about the apartheid regime. No truth was more painful or divisive than the story of the *askaris*. In the spring of 1996, Nason Ndwandwe applied to the Durban office of the Truth Commission to find out what had happened to his daughter.

For a year he heard nothing.

NASON NDWANDWE'S application joined a pile of evidence and testimony that investigators at the Truth Commission offices kept sifting through in the hope of finding a pattern. An earlier investigation, led by Justice Richard Goldstone, had produced evidence of a police hit squad operating in the Durban area. The Transvaal attorney general's office had followed up on the Goldstone investigation with one of its own, but no indictments were forthcoming. As the Truth Commission investigators dug deeper into the files, they noticed that the names of some policemen—from the same hit squad—kept recurring: Andy Taylor, Hentie Botha, J. A. Vorster, Sam Du Preez, Laurie Wasserman, and Cassie van der Westhuizen.

Stephanie Miller knew these names. She had been a member of Black Sash, a women's human-rights organization, in the nineteen-eighties, and policemen used to call her at home, threatening her with arrest and prosecution unless she stopped working with black people. Menacing talk wasn't likely to have much effect on someone as cool and businesslike as Stephanie Miller. Now she was working as an investigator for the Truth Commission. There were never enough resources or investigators to cope with the flood of requests like Nason Ndwandwe's, but the Truth Commission did have the authority to offer legal amnesty in return for full disclosure. If perpetrators could prove that they had a political motive, acted under direct orders, carried out the orders in a proportional manner (i.e., weren't sadists), and made full disclosure of their actions, they could be amnestied. Even if they failed to get amnesty, the confessions given by them at the hearing could not be used in a subsequent prosecution.

In the constitutional negotiations of 1993, the outgoing white regime, in the manner of Latin-American juntas, had held out for a blanket amnesty; Mandela and the A.N.C. refused. The compromise reached—a compromise that averted civil war and made a peaceful transition possible—was amnesty on a case-by-case basis, in return for full disclosure. A deadline, extended several times, was laid down for applications. More than seven thousand people—mostly police, but also guerrillas from the liberation movements—eventually applied for amnesty. In essence, victims of apartheid were asked to put aside their claims for retributive justice—for punishment and vengeance—in return for getting the truth. Nason Ndwandwe doesn't like amnesty. Stephanie Miller doesn't like it much, either. But it has proved the only bait capable of luring perpetrators onto the hook.

Throughout 1996, most perpetrators

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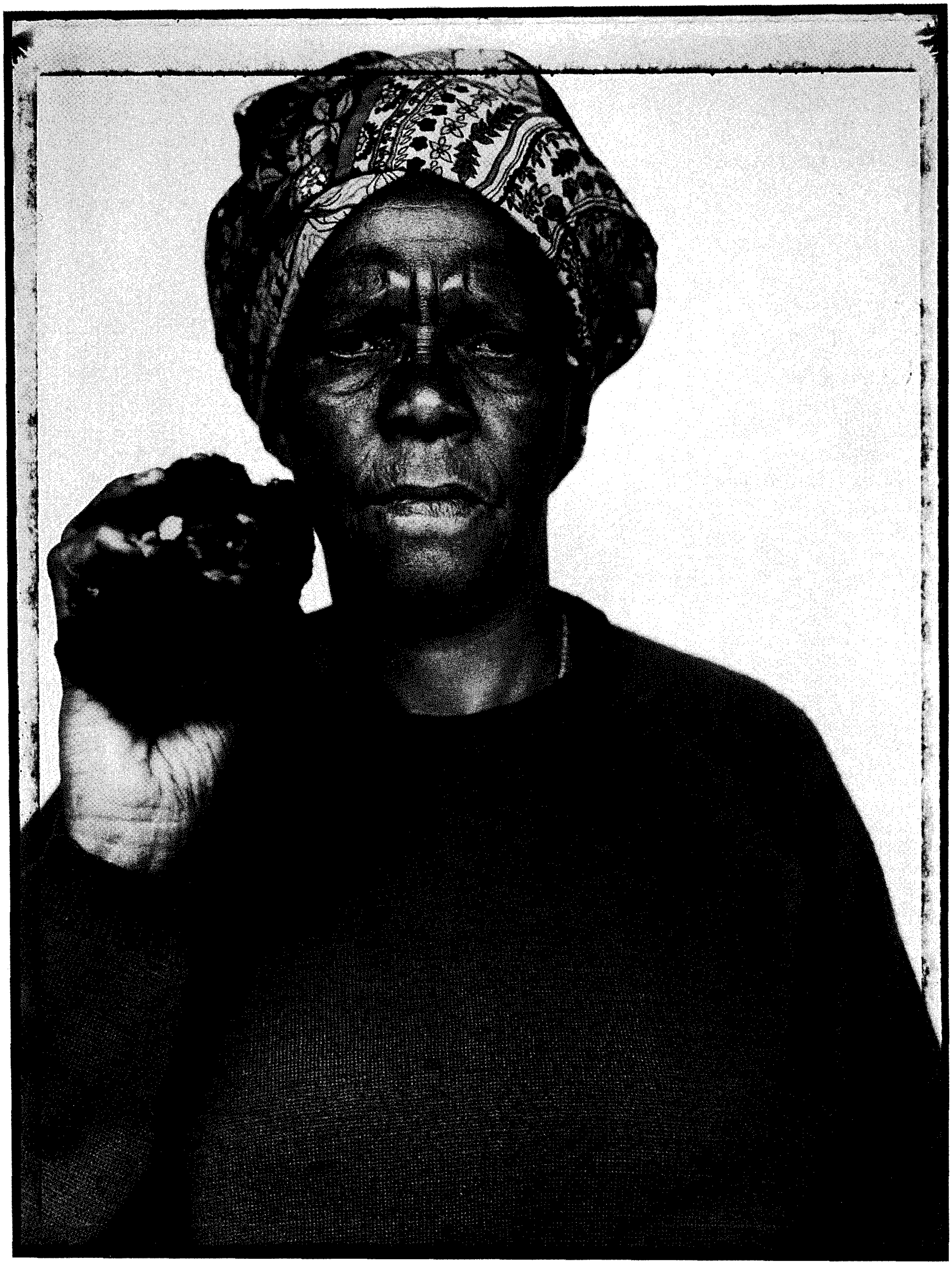
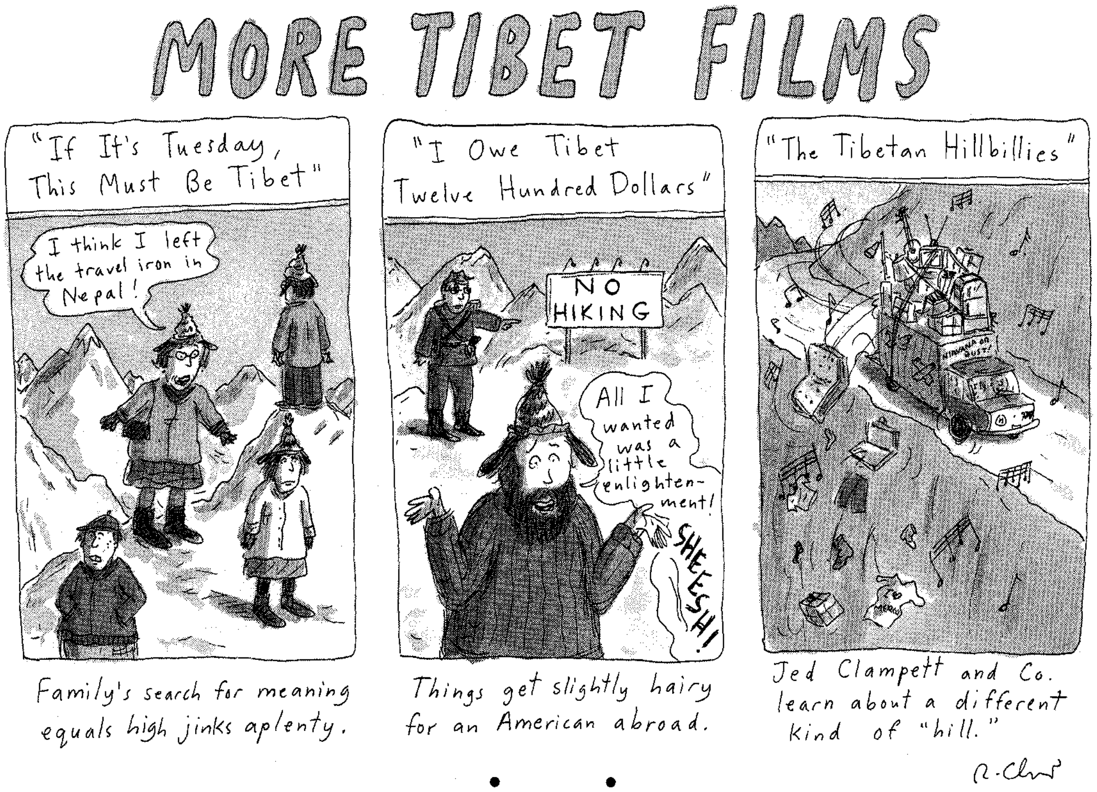


*Joyce Mtimkulu believes that her son was poisoned in police custody in 1981. She holds the hair that he lost after his ordeal.*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refused to take the bait, gambling that there wouldn't be enough evidence to prosecute them. Late in the year, Stephanie Miller decided to apply a little pressure of her own. From friends in the police force she obtained the unlisted numbers of the hit-squad policemen and began to call them the way they used to call her. She would ring them at home—most were still serving officers; one had been suspended but was on full pay—and let slip a few bits of information from the files, linking them to murders they might have thought she hadn't known about. She told them that amnesty was the only way they could avoid prosecution and jail. At first, the ploy didn't seem to work. "They were polite and put down the phone," she recalls. But after one call to Laurie Wasserman, she later learned from his girlfriend, he had ripped the bedroom door off its hinges.

On December 13, 1996, just before the amnesty deadline expired, Wasserman and the others filed applications with the Truth Commission. In Afrikaans legalese, they disclosed a trail of murder, intimidation, torture, and counter-terrorist violence stretching back to the mid-nineteen-eighties. They had abducted A.N.C. activists, shot them, and then blown up the bodies to make it appear that they had died while carrying explosives. Using *askaris*, the group had lured activists to meetings, driven them into areas of the townships controlled by political rivals of the A.N.C., and had then executed them to make it appear that they had died in black-on-black factional fighting. The killings were casual and lacked discrimination. Sometimes the police couldn't even remember the names of the people whom they had picked up in the dark, shot in the head, and thrown on some garbage dump.

Under questioning by Stephanie Miller and other Truth Commission investigators, they indicated that they knew where they had buried some of their victims. Because Andy Taylor, the commanding officer, was receiving treatment for cancer, it was not until March 12, 1997, that a convoy of forensic pathologists, investigators, five perpetrators and their lawyers, a local police video unit, and half a dozen workmen in overalls set out on a ninety-minute car journey westward from Durban to an abandoned dairy farm near Pietermaritzburg.

On a grainy police video of the exhumation you can see the perpetrators strolling among the pines and casually pointing out where they thought the investigators should dig. At a depth of fifty centimetres, the investigators found beer-bottle tops and cigarette butts; then they came to white lime scattered across reddish clay soil; at about a metre, they uncovered a femur. As a forensic pathologist's brush swept away the next layer of dirt, they found a skeleton, lying with its knees drawn up to its chest, its hands held up as if protecting its face, and the jawbone open as if death had come in the middle of a scream.

The perpetrators displayed little emotion as their work was uncovered. On succeeding days, two more skeletons were revealed. Carefully, the bones were removed from the site and reassembled on white sheets at a morgue in Pietermaritzburg.

A few days after the discovery of the bodies, members of the Truth Commission called Nason Ndwandwe into the Durban offices and then travelled with him and his wife to the morgue. A camera crew from South African television was there. On a tape you can see Nason and his wife standing on one side of the mortuary window as an orderly wearing yellow gloves wheels a steel gurney into view. On the gurney is a white plastic sheet tied in knots. The orderly unties the knots and then holds up a dirt-encrusted skull. When he tips it forward, toward Nason, a neat finger-size hole is visible in the center of the skull. The jawbone is split in two where the slug exited, smashing the victim's mouth open.

In the video you can also see the price of truth: Mrs. Ndwandwe falters, steps back, and puts her head in her hands. Nason comforts her, his face empty and drawn. But he does not take his eyes off the skull. He knows that it is Phila's—the high cheekbones are unmistakable.

They had not simply killed her. They had stripped her naked at some time prior to her execution. No clothing was found on the skeleton except a black plastic bag, which she appeared to have been wearing around her midsection as she knelt in the grave. The men who did this to Nason's daughter now held her final secret.

The policemen freely admitted killing her, but they denied having tortured her. Stephanie Miller, who has questioned the officers many times, thinks that she was tortured. “They don’t want us to believe that they acted in an inhuman manner,” Miller explains. “Killing is an act of war. They killed willingly. Torture is less acceptable. With this particular group, they didn’t seem to deny killings at all. What they denied was what happened up to the killing.”

The perpetrators admitted that they had wanted to turn Phila, who, they say, in August of 1988, two months before her death, had led a series of grenade attacks on police stations in the Transvaal which claimed the lives of three policemen. The perpetrators said that they had interrogated her in the abandoned farmhouse, had locked her in the dairy, and had taken her out into the woods and made her kneel in her grave before they shot her through the top of her head. She was twenty-three years old. After her death, they acknowledged, they had deliberately spread misinformation about her through their informers in the townships to the effect that she had been turned, that she had gone to Zimbabwe or had begun a new life in Cape Town. But, they said, she had not broken—had not betrayed any of her comrades. “She was braver than the men had been,” they told Stephanie Miller. Thus it was that from the mouths of those who had abused and killed his daughter Nason Ndwandwe learned that she had never been an *askari*. From these men he recovered her honor.

When the television people came to interview him about the discovery of Phila’s remains, Nason said that he still had one question to ask. What had happened to Phila’s child, his grandson? He would have been only a few months old when his mother disappeared. Was he still alive? Did anyone know?

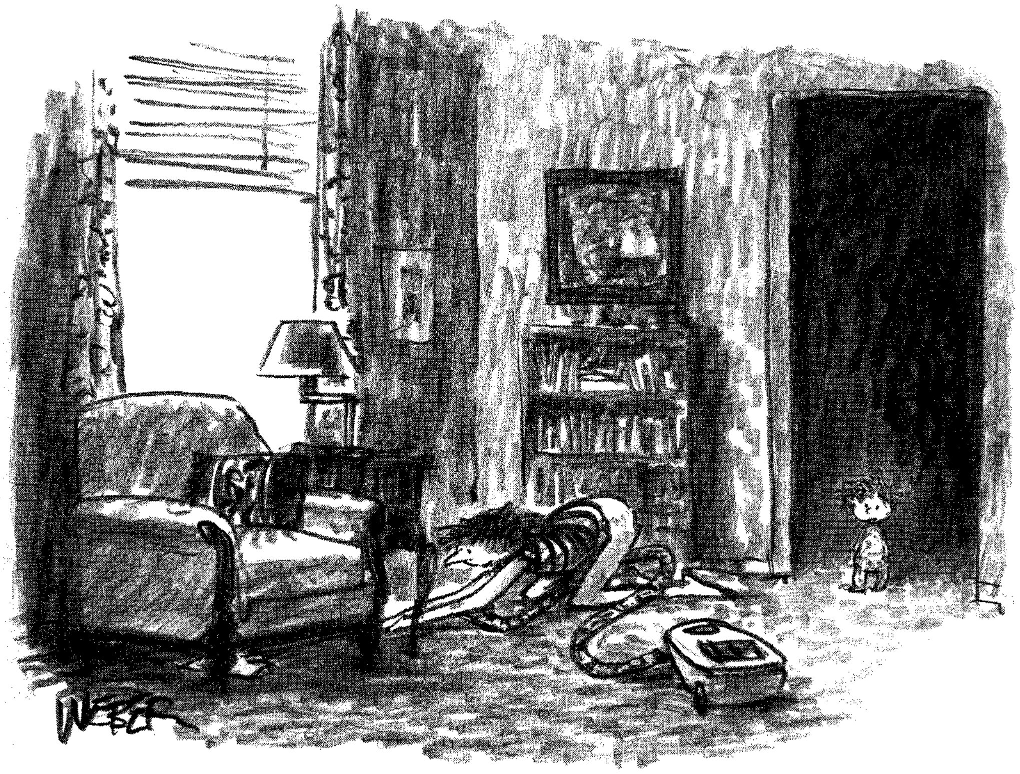
A week later, a man walked up Nason’s driveway holding the hand of a boy of nine with high cheekbones and a distinctive oval face. The child’s name was Thabang, and the man was his father. “He looked exactly like Phila,” Nason says of the child. His face fills with pleasure as he remembers. “Oh, we had a party,” he told me.

Earlier this year, at a ceremony in the Currie’s Fountain football stadium, in Durban, the guerrillas who died at the farm outside Pietermaritzburg, together with two others, whose bodies had been uncovered at another site, were honored with a state funeral. The coffins, painted in the A.N.C. colors of black, green, and yellow, were carried into the stadium by the guerrillas’ comrades while the crowd filling the stands chanted songs of struggle. Nelson Mandela himself came from Johannesburg for the ceremony, and from the podium he spoke of how the Truth Commission had stripped away the shroud of dishonor that had covered victims and perpetrators alike. At the end, Phila’s son was led up to the podium by his grandfather, and a medal was pinned on the boy’s blue jacket. For Nason Ndwandwe, that moment took away nine years of shame. In the television footage, Thabang looks around him wide-eyed as the truth sinks in. “The way he stood up there receiving a medal for his mother,” Nason recalls. “Well, nobody had to tell him what happened.”

The memorial service took place months ago. President Mandela has been and gone. Nason sits in his garage, drinking beer and brooding over what happened. He says, in a hoarse whisper, “Phila has not been accepted into the fold of the ancestors.” He has talked to the ancestors to seek their advice. They say that the manner in which she died—so far from home, in such barbarous circumstances, among strangers—means that she cannot come home to her resting place among them. “I must cleanse her,” he says. He must wash the blood from her bones to make her acceptable to the ancestors. Then he must stand before the ancestors and plead, “Please accept her.” Until then, she is wandering alone, above us somewhere, in the humid Durban night.

The next morning, with a television crew from the BBC’s “Correspondent” series following at a distance, Nason Ndwandwe and three members of his family set off on the journey to the abandoned farm. Roof tiles have crashed into the remains of the farm buildings. One room holds a set of rusting bedsprings, and rusting stanchions in the doorframes of other rooms show them to have once been makeshift cells. There isn’t another house for several miles. Pastures slope gently down to a river and then up the other side. Longhorns are grazing in the distance. The farm is the kind of place—empty enough, lonely enough—to absorb a scream.

Firewood gatherers from a nearby village have stripped all the lower branches from pines in the grove, and the trees look denuded as Nason and his family move among them, across the recently turned



*“That was an incredible nap!”*

soil, now overgrown with weeds. He finds the spot—he has been here before—and the family bow their heads. He dips into a plastic shopping bag and takes out a leafy branch from a tree in his garden and lays it on the ground. Then he bows his head and speaks to the ancestors in the Zulu language. The words are whispered, brief, matter-of-fact. After a moment, the members of the family begin singing "Amen, amen," in low, quavering voices, rocking slightly from side to side. Then they walk back to their cars, drive away down the farm track, and disappear in the heat shimmer.

They will visit every place to which Phila's bones were taken, including the Pietermaritzburg morgue and her new grave, so that her spirit can be gathered up from these places. While this is being done, Nason will keep silent. When they all get back to Umlazi, they will slaughter a goat in his back yard, and a crate of beer will be brought out. Then Nason will resume speaking, and will celebrate the safe return of Phila's spirit to the ancestors.

Nason hasn't set eyes on the men who killed his daughter. Their hearing for amnesty will not take place until next year. He doesn't know what he will do when he sees them. There was a time when he wanted to take an axe to them. Now he wants to sit down with them and look them in the eye. There is still truth to discover: which *askari* it was, in those camps in Swaziland, whom Phila had trusted so deeply that she followed him to the rendezvous that led to her death. If the policemen will reveal that last segment of the truth, Nason might have it in himself to forgive them.

JOYCE MTIMKULU has cast her eyes on the men who murdered her son. Every day for a week in late September, she sat on the stage of Centenary Hall, in Port Elizabeth, as her lawyers grilled two East Cape policemen, Nic van Rensburg and Gideon Nieuwoudt, sitting twenty feet away. In 1982, the two men had denied having anything to do with her son's disappearance; fifteen years later, they applied for amnesty for their part in his murder. (Two other officers have also requested amnesty in the case.) It does not appear to be repentance that has brought them here to Centenary Hall but fear of prosecution. Joyce is a fierce woman of sixty-one, with a scornful laugh for all the lies that these men—through their law-

### A SPRING PREVIEW
### BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

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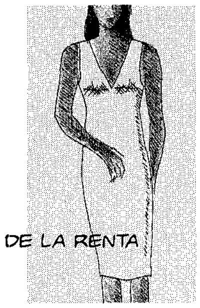
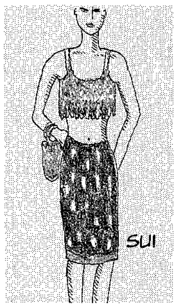
# KNEE PROBLEMS

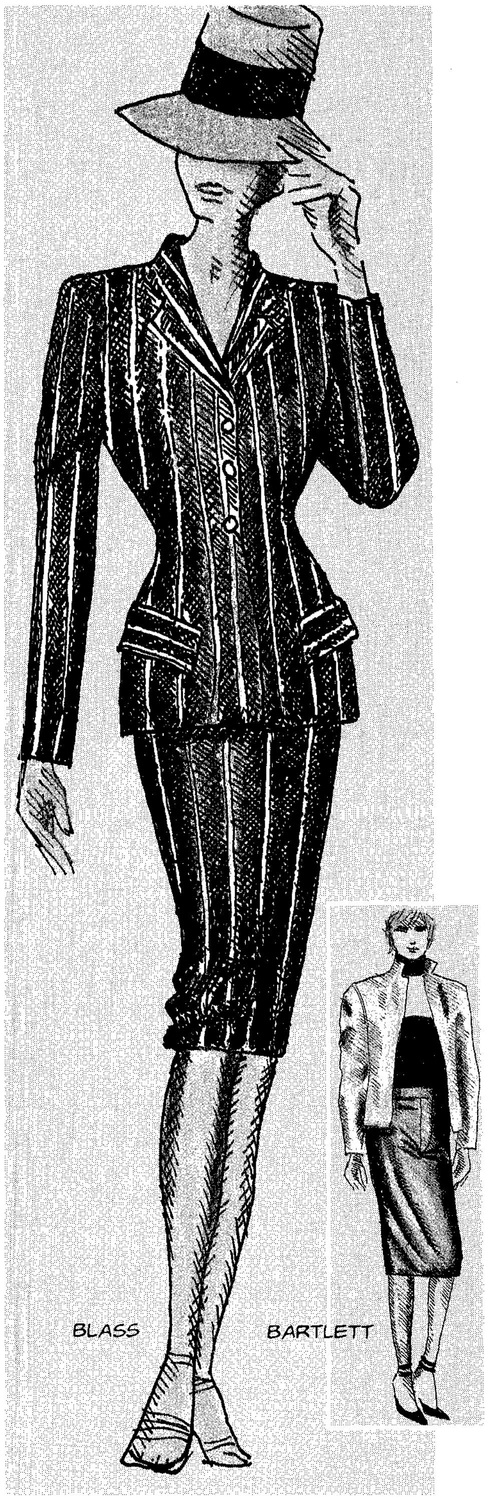
"IT looks so fresh," Bill Blass says of his new, longer-line suit for spring. With its prison-governess skirt ending well below the knee, this sober outfit—essential for that select lunchtime banquette on the sunny side of Cell Block H—is indeed fresh in heralding a plunge into lower hemlines. Goodbye, then, to this season's thigh-high eighties-revival microminis, and hello to next season's elongated, matronly outfits from the New York contingent of international designers. Mature and adult—fashion euphemisms for aging and frumpy—are now likely to become buzzwords of chic. Think gray. Think dowdy. Think Norman Bates's mother.

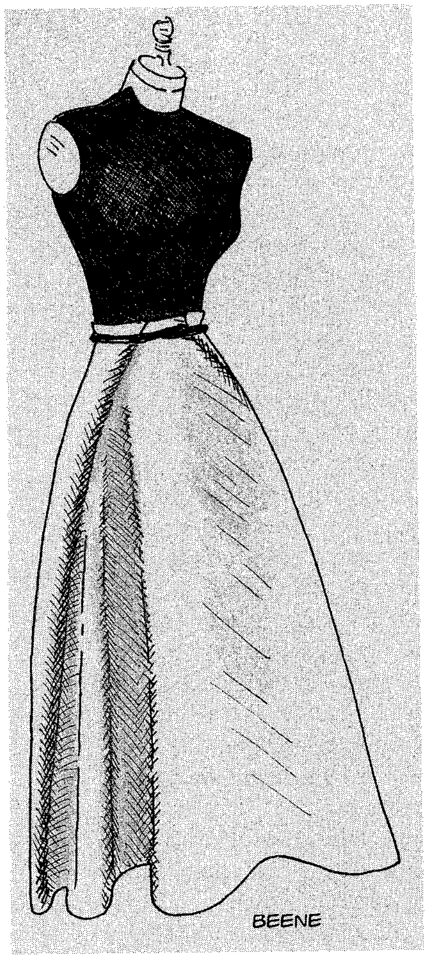
At Oscar de la Renta and Isaac Mizrahi, attenuated uptown suits and over-the-knee dresses are the news; for the terminally hip downtown designer Marc Jacobs, it's below-the-knee organza skirts. Anna Sui, on the other hand, has opted for a knee-length perkiness, using Indian saris from her bohemian busload of springtime inspirations—a pileup of Brigitte Bardot, the Duchess of Windsor, surf punk, urban tribalism, Asian bric-a-brac, and psychedelic prints. Rifat Ozbek, in his first New York show, shares Sui's thing for cross-cultural references (surf girls meet Haitians on a voodoo binge), but next to her he comes across as practically a minimalist. Geoffrey Beene is toying nostalgically with ballerina-length hostess skirts; Wynn is having a creative moment with droopy pink nylon; Michael Kors has cropped his trousers ("This length thing is much more about pants"); Ralph Lauren has given his knee-length, calf-length, and in-between-length collection a thirties boudoir look; and Calvin Klein is focussing on the ankle with billowing silk parachute dresses, which, for reasons best known to him, end in drawstring hems.

As for sex, which was all over the European catwalks: Daryl K is putting gynecologically suggestive inserts in her longline dresses. Spooky has a tarty longer look called Punk Marilyn. And John Bartlett calls his synthetic-gold pencil skirt Fetish, though he could just as readily have called it Mistake. —M.R.





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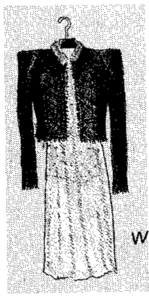
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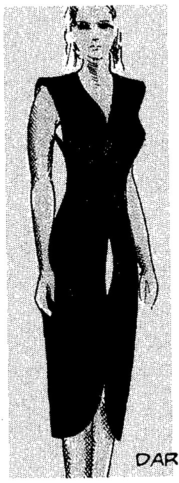
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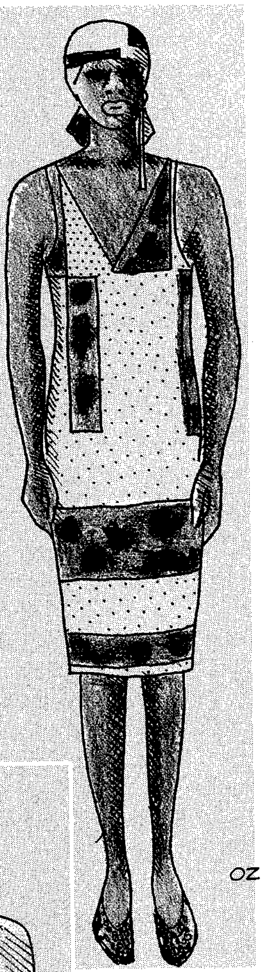
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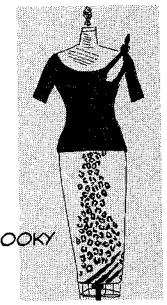
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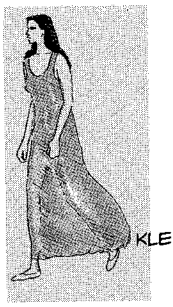
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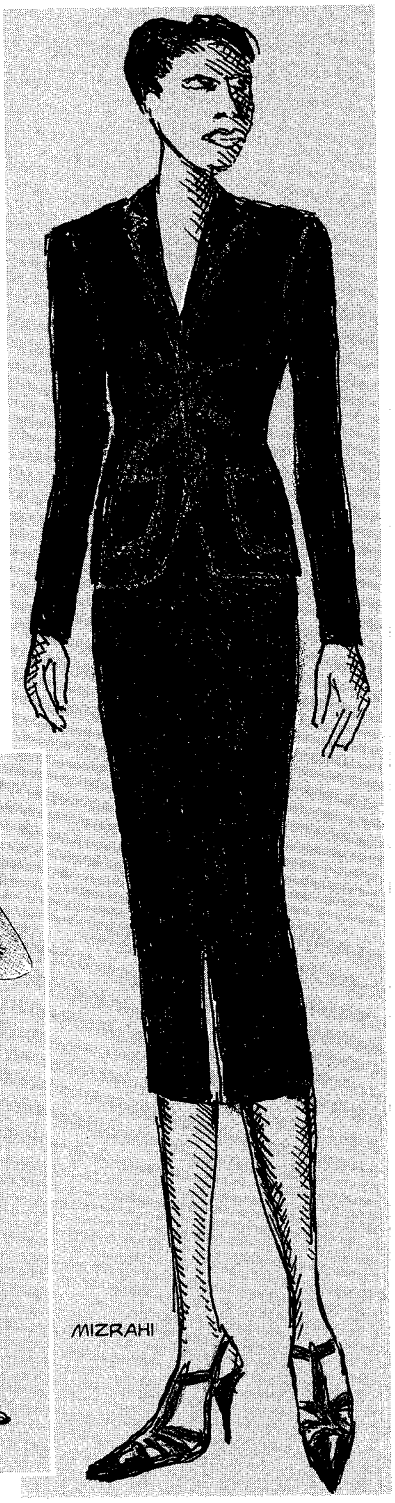
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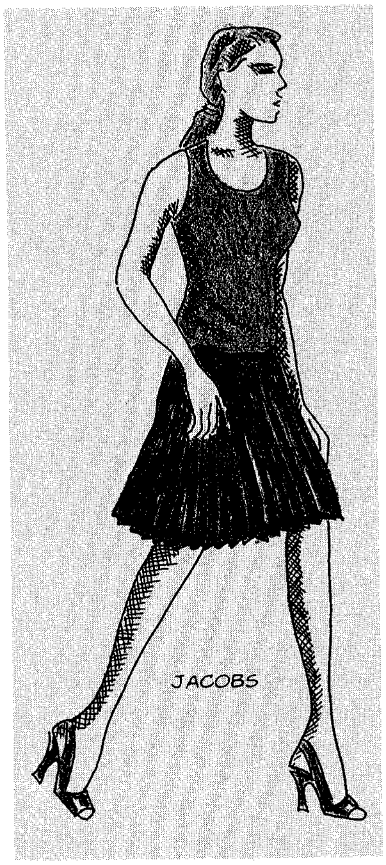
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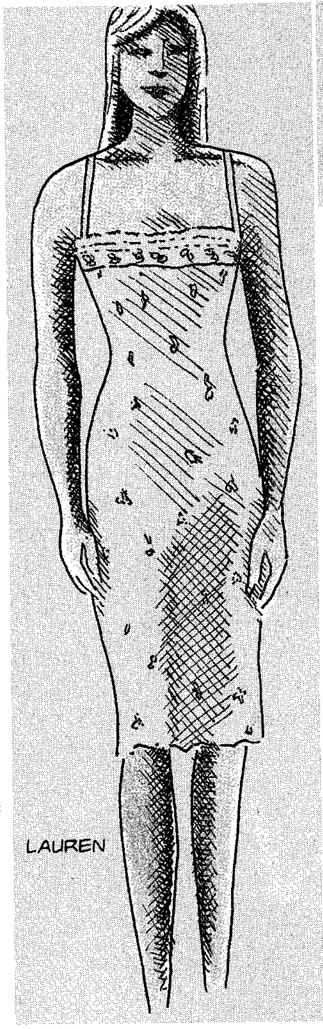
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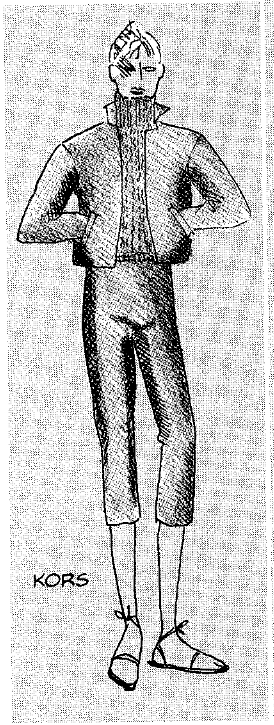

KORS

yers—have told her. But now she hopes that they will tell the truth, for it is a condition of amnesty. She stares at them across the stage, listening through earphones as their answers, delivered in Afrikaans, are translated into her native Xhosa. Five hundred-odd spectators, nearly all of them township people, sit in the hall listening to every word.

The cop named van Rensburg wears glasses; he has a snub nose, and a deep furrow down the middle of his forehead; his mouth is small and tight, and when he talks he says as little as he can. Nieuwoudt has long sideburns and a face shaped like a spade; his teeth are spaced wide apart, and when he occasionally smiles or smirks you see that the upper row is broken and twisted. He keeps his answers short—"Yes, Your Honor," "No, Your Honor"—staring past Joyce Mtimkulu's unrelenting gaze.

There have been some Truth Commission hearings during which perpetrators have spoken directly to victims, to confess or to seek forgiveness. There have been moments of catharsis when the tortured could ask their torturers to demonstrate, one more time, before a disbelieving audience, exactly how they'd placed a wet sack over the victims' heads so that they would choke. In those hearings, it was as if both victim and torturer had to live out their shame in public in order to put it behind them. In another hearing, a husband who had lost his wife asked the men who had killed her to look him in the eye and ask for forgiveness. And they did. But here in Port Elizabeth the eyes of victim and perpetrator do not meet.

LIKE Nason Ndwandwe, Joyce Mtimkulu must now wonder whether she ever really knew her son, Siphiwo. She cannot explain why, as a teen-ager, Siphiwo became the one who led the boycotts, marches, and demonstrations against the regime's attempt, begun in 1976, to force black children to take their lessons in the hated language of Afrikaans. From school boycotts, Siphiwo, still in his teens, moved into the A.N.C., distributing anti-Republic Day pamphlets. In April of 1981, the police broke up an anti-Republic Day demonstration in the market square in the Port Elizabeth township of Kwazakele, where the Mtimkulus live. They cornered Siphiwo in an alley off Daku Street. They told him to come out, and when he did they shot him in the arm. When he regained consciousness, he was being beaten in the local police station. For the next six months, he was held in various detention centers in the Port Elizabeth area, including the notorious sixth floor of the Sanlam Building, a grimy former insurance-company headquarters, where, while traffic on an overpass below drowned out the noise, the police would beat up local activists. In 1977, they had knocked Steve Biko's head against a radiator in Room 619 of the Sanlam, and he had died of his injuries. Activists who survived a visit to the Sanlam say that the kicking began as soon as they got you into the elevator. The black cops had to show especial keenness to their white masters. Black hands were nearly always holding you when the police forced a wet towel over your nose and mouth until you choked and lost consciousness. Black hands were nearly always holding you when the police plunged your head into a bath until you choked and nearly drowned.

Siphiwo Mtimkulu endured six months of this kind of treatment. Once, he told his mother, Nieuwoudt took him out to Jeffrey's Bay. The beaches are particularly beautiful there, windswept and remote. The cops rammed a hood over Siphiwo's head and chained his hands behind his back, so that, as he sat on the rocks, he knew he was on the beach only from the sound of the waves and the spray that chilled him to the core. He could smell a *braai*—Afrikaans for barbecue—nearby. When the cops had finished with their spareribs, they tossed the bones at his feet.

They were the lords of the Eastern Cape, those policemen. They held the townships in terror, and even now when Joyce talks about Gideon Nieuwoudt she lowers her voice to a whisper. It is not a whisper of fear so much as awe at his malignity.

There had been a time when the South African police just shot people—they did so at Sharpeville in 1960—and left them to die in the dust for all the world to see. But then the world turned South Africa into a pariah, and the black community refused to be intimidated, and the regime began experimenting with tortures—like the wet towel—appropriate to a human-rights age, to a time when, even in South Africa, the police couldn't afford to release prisoners with marks on their bodies.

Just before Siphiwo was released, in October, 1981, the police began feeding him up with meals brought in from outside—and cooked, they said, by the policemen's wives. He ate the meals, but after he was released he rapidly became ill—so ill, Joyce remembers, that he had to crawl to the bathroom to vomit. Then his hair began to come out in tufts. Joyce still has that curly black hair in a plastic bag. When she takes the hair out of the bag, she points to the dried portions of his scalp that are still sticking to it. A toxicologist at Groote Schuur Hospital, in Cape Town, figured out that Siphiwo had been poisoned with thallium, an odorless, tasteless substance used to poison rats. The poisoning left Siphiwo partly paralyzed. "These Boers have finished me," he told his mother.

When Siphiwo was released from hospital, in January of 1982, and flew back to Port Elizabeth, his friends were there to greet him and take him off the plane in a wheelchair. By then, the papers were filled with allegations that the police had poisoned him. There are photographs in Joyce's album of a smiling Siphiwo, in his wheelchair, addressing crowded meetings of students. Also, in December of 1981, he had made an unusual move: he filed suit against the police alleging torture. Three months later, he filed another suit, alleging poisoning.

On April 14, 1982, Siphiwo and his friend Topsy Madaka set out in Madaka's Mazda for him to get a checkup at a local hospital and then to meet a woman at the Holiday Inn in downtown Port Elizabeth. A few days later, the police came to the Mtimkulus' tiny four-room house and told Joyce and her husband, Sipho, that they had found Madaka's car abandoned at a crossing point into neighboring Lesotho. Siphiwo and Topsy, they said, had escaped to join the A.N.C. For a time, Joyce believed the story; she even went to Lesotho herself, accompanied by some local white activists, to see whether she could find him.

Joyce is bitter about how the police maliciously kept her hopes alive. Behind it all was Nieuwoudt. She swears that he

*"I'm glad we won, and I hope that someday we'll have a university that our football team can be proud of."*

once came to her house himself, disguised as a Methodist preacher, wearing a dog collar and with a Bible in his hand.

In 1990, when Nelson Mandela was freed, the exiles came home. It was then, while everyone else was celebrating the birth of a new South Africa, that Joyce finally had to admit that her son must be dead. Soon afterward, renegade members of police hit squads began confessing their part in the dirty war of the nineteen-eighties.

In April, 1996, the Truth Commission held human-rights hearings in Port Elizabeth to enable victims to testify. Joyce Mtimkulu went to a packed hall in the East London section, to testify in the presence of Bishop Desmond Tutu. Lawyers for the police filed injunctions preventing her from taking the stand. When they told her she could not testify, the shock was so great that she fainted and had to be helped from the hall. Sipho sat stunned, tears streaming down his face.

When Joyce finally did get the opportunity to testify, later that year, she made it clear that the truth that mattered to her had to be very extensive and very precise, the kind of truth that gives a person closure: "Where did they take him? Who handed him over to them? What did they do to him? Where did they leave the bones of my child?" But it was not until the last available moment, in mid-December of 1996, when Nieuwoudt and van Rensburg finally applied for amnesty, that Joyce began to get the answers.

Now, in the September amnesty hearings, she is face to face with them at last, and she hears them tell the story in their own words. She learns that while she was in the Emanuel Church in Kwazakele, being told how she must persevere and endure the bondage of the Pharaoh, they were going to churches on the other side of town, which told them that apartheid belonged to the eternal order of things. Siphiwo had said that he was fighting so that blacks and whites could live in the same nice brick houses. Nieuwoudt and van Rensburg had been told they were fighting a "total onslaught" from Communists, and that such a fight is not conducted by Queensberry rules, with one arm tied behind your back.

Nieuwoudt and van Rensburg now testify that they began planning Siphiwo's murder two days after he lodged his second lawsuit; they had considered rearresting him and deporting him but had rejected such options because—the poisoning having made him into a martyr—another arrest would spark riots in the townships. Informers in Topsy Madaka's circle tipped them off that the two young men were heading for the Holiday Inn. The police stopped Topsy's car and, after getting in, told them to drive east. Along the way, Nieuwoudt told them to stop, to buy a jerrican of gasoline, and he put it in the trunk. Then they drove for an hour or so to a deserted police station called Post Chalmers, in the middle of the countryside. Now, as Joyce listens intently through her headphones, van Rensburg's lawyer leads him through his testimony, revealing the truth in laconic Afrikaans:

> Was the plan to eliminate the two deceased there?
> Yes.
> Did you carry the two deceased outside?
> Yes.
> Did you then shoot Siphiwo Mtimkulu?
> Correct.
> What did you do with the corpses?
> We placed them on the firewood.
> Then you poured gasoline on them?
> Yes.
> Was the fire lit for the purposes of burning the corpses?
> Yes.
> Did it burn for approximately 6 hours?
> Yes.
> Did you then take the remains, place them in a garbage bag and dispose of them in the Fish River?
> Yes.

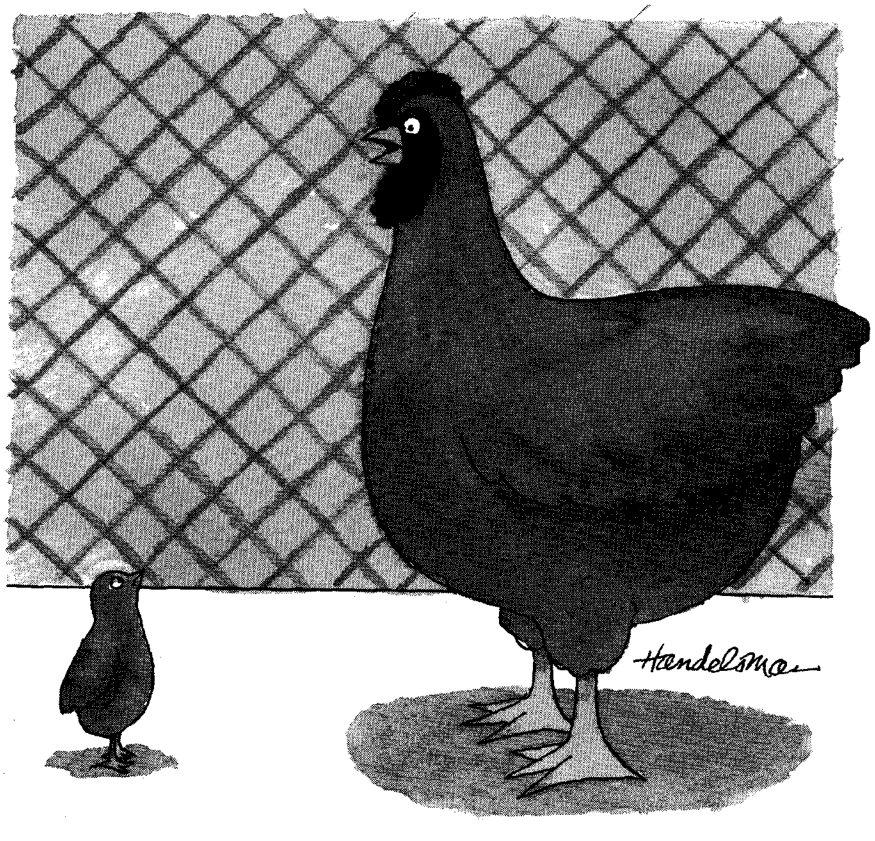
As the crowd in the hall hears this, it makes a sound like a rising surge of the sea. Joyce, who has been accompanied by Siphiwo's two children, begins to weep. Truth Commission assistants stroke her shoulders. The police watch Joyce crying. There is no expression on their faces. One of the defense lawyers is heard to mutter in Afrikaans on an open microphone, as he watches the family break down, "Fifteen years later, and now they are fucking crying for the first time."

WHEN Nieuwoudt takes the stand, hastily scrawled posters are being waved in the hall. They are held up toward the police and they say "No amnesty for liars" and "Tell us the truth." The presiding commissioner, Justice Andrew Wilson, asks for them to be lowered. Slowly and unwillingly, the crowd puts the posters down.

Nieuwoudt confesses that he shot Topsy Madaka with a single bullet from his service revolver. He admits that he spent six hours turning the bones of Topsy and Siphiwo over in the fire so that they would be burned to ash. He says that he was the one who scooped the cold ash into a garbage bag and dumped it in the Fish River. But he denies torturing anyone. A thin smirk crosses his lips. "It was the strategy of some detainees after they were released to claim that they had been tortured in order to prove that they had not been informers," he says. Suddenly, one of Joyce's grandchildren, sitting twenty feet from Nieuwoudt, leaps to her feet, runs forward, and shouts, "You are dogs and liars! Why do you not tell the truth?" As security-staff members from the Truth Commission lead her back to her seat, Nieuwoudt watches her go, his face empty and indifferent.

The hearings last for five days. To the end, Nieuwoudt and van Rensburg deny any role in Mtimkulu's poisoning, and refuse to admit that they tortured him. If the catharsis promised by the Truth Commission depends on the exchange of forgiveness for contrition, of absolution for apology, no catharsis occurs. As the hearings draw to a close, there is one statement that seems to infuriate Joyce more than any other—a contention by Nieuwoudt that he gave her son sleeping tablets before shooting him. She explodes, crying out, "That is not the truth! I am sure Nieuwoudt wanted him to know 'I am going to kill you now.' They are still telling lies. Siphiwo suffered before he died. I know this."

One evening, I spend some time with three of the amnesty commissioners, in the Kruger Guest House, in the suburbs of Port Elizabeth, an enclave of doilied gentility where they take refuge every night after the hearings. Chris de Jager is an Afrikaner politician in his late fifties, with the thin, ruddy face of a farmer. It pains him—and angers him, too—that the policemen keep saying they did what they did in his name, in the defense of the Afrikaner people. He had known that there were hit squads, he says, but he had never imagined their extent, the sheer number of people killed. And, concerning the stories of bodies being burned and bones being crushed and dumped in rivers, he says, "The way some of the killings were done really shocked me."



*"Even more dangerous than crossing the road is being undercooked."*

Andrew Wilson, a bluff liberal Supreme Court Justice, knows that the hearings, during which the crowd dances around the hall at recess, and people shout abuse at the perpetrators, are not normal courtroom procedure. The hearings are a ritual of empowerment, in which people who, in Desmond Tutu's words, were "treated like rubbish" all their lives get to be treated like citizens. Wilson knows that they have waited fifty years, in some cases, for this moment, and he lets them have their say. But the hearings never degenerate into mob justice: when he tells people to put their posters away and sit down, they do. There is discipline here—a complicity between the judges and a huge crowd to keep the proceedings fair, even to the perpetrators.

Finally, there is Ntsiki Sandi, a small, burly Xhosa lawyer in his twenties, with a background in human-rights law. The hearings that shook him were in the white areas up north, where black activists sought amnesty for killing white farmers. The farmers would see a car by the side of the road with a wheel off, and they would stop to help, and then they would be killed. "It made me mad that people would be tricked like this," he says. He, like de Jager, has come a considerable distance from old certainties.

The three commissioners travel the country together, hearing cases, sleeping in guesthouses that Sandi wouldn't have been allowed to set foot in a decade ago. Despite the fact that de Jager will tell you, in an idle moment, that the separate development of races might not have been a bad idea and could have had a future if it hadn't been forced on the blacks, the commissioners manage to hammer out unanimous amnesty agreements.

But the case of Nieuwoudt and van Rensburg will test their unanimity. Sandi seems to see it as a pure and simple police coverup. They poisoned an activist; when he survived and threatened to blow their cover, they killed him. Nothing political in that, he says, nothing that meets the amnesty criterion. And, because they won't admit to the poisoning, they haven't met the full-disclosure criterion, either. The commissioners don't announce their decision at the hearings: it will come out as a writ-

## FATHER'S OLD BLUE CARDIGAN

Now it hangs on the back of the kitchen chair
where I always sit, as it did
on the back of the kitchen chair where he always sat.

I put it on whenever I come in,
as he did, stamping
the snow from his boots.

I put it on and sit in the dark.
He would not have done this.
Coldness comes paring down from the moonbone in the sky.

His laws were a secret.
But I remember the moment at which I knew
he was going mad inside his laws.

He was standing at the turn of the driveway when I arrived.
He had on the blue cardigan with the buttons done up all
  the way to the top.
Not only because it was a hot July afternoon

but the look on his face—
as a small child who has been dressed by some aunt early
  in the morning
for a long trip

on cold trains and windy platforms
will sit very straight at the edge of his seat
while the shadows like long fingers

over the haystacks that sweep past
keep shocking him
because he is riding backwards.

—Anne Carson

ten judgment, sometime before Christmas.

The reality is that, when you trade amnesty for truth, murderers get away with murder. Sometimes that reality makes Joyce Mtimkulu ill with rage. She might have been willing to forgive her son's killers, but their effrontery—Nieuwoudt's smirks, the lawyer's comments under his breath, the injunctions preventing her testimony, the perpetrators' refusal to say one word of regret—is beginning to make her long for punishment. At the Kruger Guest House, Ntsiki Sandi nods, and says, "Yes, I understand that feeling of revulsion." But de Jager shakes his head, and says, "People who committed these crimes would never have come forward and told the truth unless there was an incentive." Wilson agrees: "Policemen who knew they were almost entirely safe did come forward."

AMNESTY may be necessary simply because apartheid managed to cover the traces of most of its crimes. Its style of repression became ever more secretive, so that white South Africans like Chris de Jager wouldn't know what was preserving their suburban villas and lush walled gardens, and so that the international community, which denounced apartheid in the abstract, wouldn't have any idea just how much killing was done. In the repression that is characteristic of a human-rights era, such killing must be secret. It must be hidden. In this context, truth becomes a kind of justice.

Watching a society struggle with the dilemmas of amnesty changes what one thinks about justice. It is associated with punishment, with putting people behind bars. But it can also mean something else: truth and moral reparation, the restitching together of a moral world, where sons and daughters do not disappear in the night, where evildoers eventually face the consequences of what they have done.

The hearings in Centenary Hall make one aware of how much human beings need to believe that they belong to a moral order. What propels Joyce Mtimkulu and Nason Ndwandwe and the hundreds of families, both black and white, to come before the Truth Commission is the impulse to create a public realm where truth is truth and lies are lies, where actions are held accountable, where the state is held to certain standards. In South Africa, that is perhaps the deepest yearning of all, after decades of infamy.

A moral order is too large and impalpable an aim to be achieved by any commission. Perhaps, at the beginning, the men and women of the Truth Commission thought they could draw a line under the past and turn to a clean page. But veterans of the process are now coming to terms with the fact that their work will never be over. Violence insinuated itself into the heart of the country's institutions, into each race's loyalty to its own. It will take generations to eliminate that violence, but at least now there is some measure of shared truth about it. It is just as well, perhaps, that South Africans have learned enough truth from the commission to never entirely trust their policemen—and each other—again.

The Truth Commission draws to a close next summer, when it issues its final report. Those who took part—the judges, the investigators, many of the victims—feel that they have helped the country heal itself. Not all the hidden graves have been found; not all the hidden injuries have been exposed. But eventually the pursuit of justice, truth, and reparation—the reckoning with the past—must give way to a reckoning with the future. Nason Ndwandwe may never know who betrayed his daughter, and he may ultimately decide that he does not want to know; there have been enough revenge killings of *askaris* as it is. Joyce Mtimkulu came to the end of the hearings in Port Elizabeth and, neither happy nor reconciled, sighed, "It's over." She knows that her son's bones will never be recovered. ◆

## ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

# PRIMO UOMO

*The next Pavarotti may sound like a woman.*

### BY MARK LEVINE

ON a recent Sunday afternoon, the young American countertenor David Daniels walked onstage at Alice Tully Hall to a clamor of bravos and foot-stamping. He wore the steel-gray suit of a banker; his face was darkened by a stubble that was halfway on its journey to a beard; and he leaned an elbow on the polished Steinway with the cheerful indolence of one who was content simply to hang out. Daniels unbuttoned his suit jacket, arched his eyebrows, parted his lips as if to whisper some intimate secret, and released his voice—a muscular and languid sound, at once piercing and caressing, that is usually found somewhere in the middle register of a mezzo-soprano.

After centuries of obscurity, the countertenor voice has in recent years been in vogue, thanks largely to the revival of interest in Baroque opera and the current fascination with indeterminate boundaries between the genders. (Other full-blooded young countertenors on the international music scene include Brian Asawa, Derek Lee Ragin, Michael Chance, Andreas Scholl, and Jochen Kowalski.) Still, audiences have never quite got past the suspicion that high-voiced men are exotic and rather charmless specimens, compromised both musically and sexually.

Daniels, who made his New York City début last week in Handel's "Xerxes," sounds nothing like the usual member of the breed, for his voice is neither a pale simulation of a mezzo-soprano's nor a weird hybrid of primo uomo and prima donna. Rather, it is the uncommon real thing: a voice that possesses the heroic flintiness of a Joan Sutherland, the acrobatic agility of a Marilyn Horne, and the mysterious pathos of a Frederica von Stade. (Both Horne and von Stade were in the audience at Tully Hall.) More than one opera fan has remarked on the somewhat disquieting prospect that the much sought-after "next Pavarotti" may turn out to be a young man with tremendous onstage bravado who stirs inarticulate passions by singing very much like a woman.

Over the past year, I'd grown familiar with the striking allure of Daniels's voice, and with the complicated reactions it inspires. I'd heard operagoers in Miami titter nervously over his portrayal of the Roman tyrant Nero—at once swaggering and ravishing—in Monteverdi's "The Coronation of Poppaea." I'd seen many audience members at a performance in London close their eyes in an apparent effort to block out the incongruity between the husky, athletic man they were seeing and the vibrant soprano they were hearing.

Daniels himself seemed unfazed by all this. "Oh, I'm used to it," he told me. "The programs fly open and the people all say, 'What *is* this?' to themselves, and we take it from there." He added, "I hear two conflicting things when people talk about my singing: first, what a masculine, powerful sound it is; and second, how beautiful it is, like listening to a soprano or a mezzo. I hope that both are true."

Offstage, Daniels, who is thirty-one, turns out to be comfortably and unmistakably a *guy*. He is polite to his elders, but out of their presence he can discharge a stream of raunchy comments. He wears jeans and gym socks almost everywhere he goes, and he likes dining out at Burger King. During a week of opera performances in Miami, he invited me to his hotel one evening to watch college basketball—fortified by warm beer and pizza from the box. But none of this was quite enough to quell his irritation over an encounter with an elderly patron of the local opera company, who had asked him if he'd been castrated.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Daniels lives, I watched him play a pickup basketball game, throwing elbows and diving for loose balls. Afterward, he drove me around town in his Saturn, pointing out various restaurants in which he had once bussed tables. In London, he complained of having been obliged to shave his usual scruffy beard for his role of Sesto in Handel's "Giulio Cesare," and sounded as though he thought that his vocal prowess was somehow vested in his facial hair. An amateur psychoanalyst might suspect him of compensating for his feminine voice by cloaking himself in typically masculine trappings, but such an analysis would only bore Daniels. "I know what I'm doing technically when I'm singing," he says. "But why I can produce the sound I can, I don't know. It was given to me."

"WHAT is Michael Jackson if not a countertenor?" René Machado, a countertenor, asked me in the course of pointing out that high male voices have long been a staple of pop music's head-first lunges at emotional rapture, from Little Richard to Prince to Queen. Joseph Jennings, an African-American countertenor, who is the music director of Chanticleer, the renowned all-male group that has become something of a training ground for countertenors, reminded me, "Men singing high isn't considered strange in African-American culture. In doo-wop groups, or in quartets, someone always sang on top of the tune."

In musical high culture, audiences are accustomed to the cross-dressing spectacle—always female to male—of "trouser" roles in operas like "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Der Rosenkavalier," but a man who sings like a woman without hiding behind the pose of false adolescence or of camp has, until recently, been liable to embarrass the mainstream.

It wasn't always so. For nearly two centuries, much of Western opera was constructed around the talents of Italian castrati male mezzos and sopranos, who had been unmanned in prepubescence. Historians continue to grope for ways of explaining the peculiar outbreak of church-sanctioned castration in the papal states of Italy late in the sixteenth century. Some have argued that the anxiety caused by women's voices, which were considered inherently erotic, was the decisive factor; others have pointed to evidence that St. Paul's injunction "Let the woman learn in silence" was invoked to exclude women from church choirs.

The absence of female singers created a problem for composers. Countertenors—

*"With this voice," Daniels says, "there is a feeling of being set free." Photograph by Max Vadukul.*

male singers capable of pushing their voices into the alto range—were sometimes employed to tackle the high range of polyphonic music, but their voices were generally derided as flimsy. Boy sopranos could do nothing to hold off the vocal ravages of puberty. At the same time, offering a son to the Church for chaste service was an acknowledged means of climbing out of poverty. "In Italy," Rousseau observed, "there are barbarous fathers who sacrifice nature for financial gain and hand over their children for this operation."

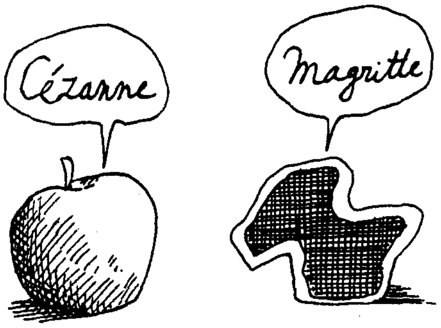
The castrato, the music historian Patrick Barbier notes in his authoritative book "The World of the Castrati," "embodied the trinity—man, woman and child—distilled from an asexual personality and a voice often judged sublime and sensual by contemporary observers who were certainly more kindly disposed towards artifice than the general public of today." Displaying virtuosic power without sexual danger, this cadre of sterilized men roved across Europe, earning extravagant fees and becoming sensational subjects of gossip and objects of reverence. The vocal powers of the most celebrated eighteenth-century castrato, Farinelli—the subject of a heavy-breathing 1995 film biography—were considered so magical that in 1737 he was enlisted to cure the depression of King Philip V of Spain by singing in the monarch's ear.

When the tide of Enlightenment disapproval pushed opera toward more realistic simplicities, the castrati went into decline. By the early nineteenth century, methods of vocal training had been developed that enabled tenors to displace castrati in heroic roles; they made possible a male voice that combined a rich and powerful chest sound with the ability to scale the vocal heights up to a high C. The only known recording of a latter-day castrato, which was made in 1904 by one Alessandro Moreschi, of the Sistine Chapel choir, has the sound of a gloomy, aggrieved wail.

By the nineteen-fifties, the burgeoning early-music movement had created its first star countertenor—the English singer Alfred Deller—and a new, if narrow, career path opened for those who would otherwise have languished in choir lofts. I sought out recordings of Deller, who died in 1979, and was fascinated by his voice—a skeletal, limpid peal, which sounds like the manifested voice of ephemera, of all things poised on the edge of decline. What Deller's singing lacks is any trace of psychological realism: it comes across as emotionally neutered, unable to contend with lust, rage, shame, or anxiety, as Daniels's voice can. Daniels is the first countertenor with *attitude*—the first to go completely beyond the fey and self-conscious persona of those in the Deller lineage. Martin Katz, Daniels's accompanist, told me, "I had a real bias against the countertenor voice, because the only countertenors I'd heard were consistent with the standard that had been set in the nineteen-fifties—the hooty, extraterrestrial kind of sound. David's is a warm, human, mainstream sound. It has vibrato all the time—something that many countertenors don't use. It's sensuous, it's large, it's high, it's low. It's a *normal* kind of voice."

SOMETHING happened—or didn't happen—to Daniels when, around 1979, at the age of thirteen, he reached puberty. Daniels had grown to that age in Spartanburg, South Carolina, focussed on a single ambition. "I wanted to be the best tenor in the world," he says. (His parents were both singers who taught voice at the local Converse College.) With the onset of adolescence, his voice began, in the normal course of events, to grow rough and to break, and he waited for it to settle into a secure timbre, so that he could train in earnest for his future as a tenor. That never happened; instead, he found himself always able to produce a sparkling boyish soprano. "I just kept singing that way around the house," he says. "Constantly, without even thinking about it, I would sing soprano arias—from 'Traviata' and so on. My mother would be on me a lot to stop it. She thought it wouldn't be good for my tenor voice, which was true." Both parents recall their son as a "very lively child," who, at the age of three, would "go out on the front porch and sing 'The Star-Spangled Banner' at the top of his lungs."

The family spent summers at the Brevard Music Center, in the mountains of North Carolina, where Daniels's father was the resident baritone, and Daniels would wander into opera rehearsals and listen, awestruck, to the parade of stars who came to perform. "Moffo, Horne, MacNeil, Merrill—I didn't even know what I was hearing at that age, but I couldn't help soaking it in," he recalls. "My fantasy life revolved around being an opera singer. I used to play a recording of Franco Corelli singing Edgardo in 'Lucia di Lammermoor,' and I'd mouth the words and act out these huge emotional scenes in my room. I wanted to stand up there onstage and make these fabulous animal sounds that Corelli made."



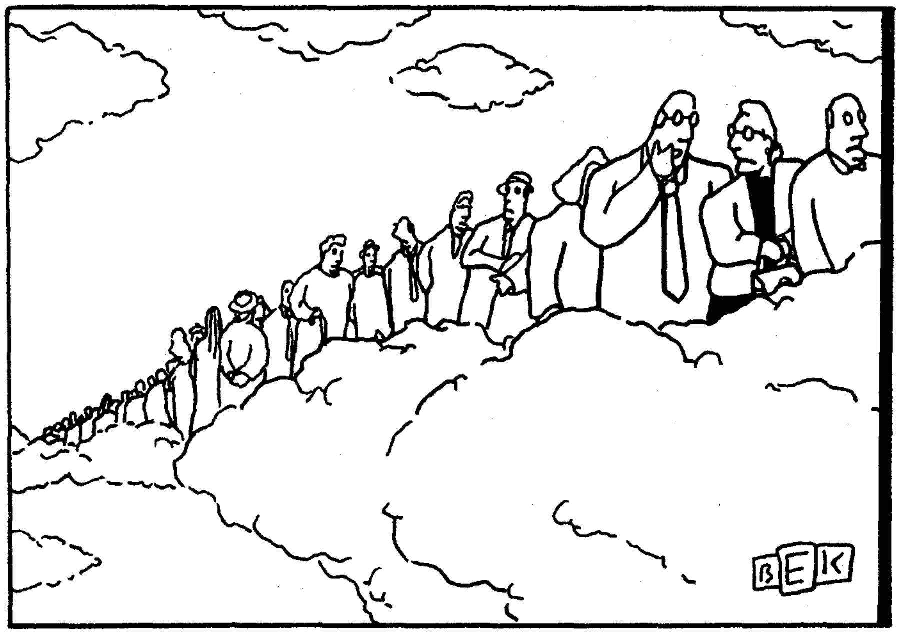
Daniels began to sing boy-soprano roles with professional ensembles at the age of ten. He and his parents now suspect that the musculature of his vocal cords—what they call his "vocal memory"—remained narrowly programmed to produce nothing deeper than soprano sounds, the way a runner who trains as a sprinter may not have the legs to undertake a marathon. At seventeen, with the shadow of a beard, Daniels still took on an occasional boy-soprano role, but he kept his high voice a secret from the neighborhood kids who came to his house to play basketball. A year later, he enrolled at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music as a tenor. He gained a measure of campus renown for performing drunkenly accurate imitations of Leontyne Price and Montserrat Caballé, but he was constantly struggling to navigate the upper reaches of the tenor's range with assurance. "It felt so unnatural to sing as a tenor," he told me. "I know singing is difficult and takes a lot of work, but it shouldn't be *that* hard. I shouldn't have to push my stomach muscles down and tighten my sphincter muscle just so an F won't crack." He goes on to say, "I was so depressed. Since I was three or four, I'd been singing my guts out, and here I was thinking, What the hell do I do now? I knew I wasn't going to make it as a tenor."

Daniels's tenor was strong and sweet enough to land him a graduate fellowship at the University of Michigan's School of Music, but he did not particularly stand out. The tenor George Shirley, who was his teacher at the time, recalls that although Daniels had "an excellent tenor voice," he "couldn't access the notes above A with any ease or consistency," and adds, "There was a hole there."

Recently, Daniels and I were sitting on the living-room floor of his Ann Arbor ranch house, watching a videotape of his graduate-school performance, as tenor, in the title role of Benjamin Britten's "Albert Herring." The singer on the tape was a different creature entirely from the one I'd seen onstage: he moved stiffly, tentatively; and his voice, though marked by some of the brightness of a good Broadway singer, was shallow and labored. He now told me that in those days he'd been paralyzed by a fear of high notes—some of which he hit, some of which emerged terribly cracked. Daniels the countertenor squirmed on the rug, keeping his head cocked to the side as he watched the tape of Daniels the tenor; he looked like someone who was being shown a picture of himself that had been taken during an illness from which he had long since recovered.

"I made the switch on March 2, 1992," he said, reciting the date like a convert. "Thank God Almighty." He had begun to see a psychotherapist, who told him that he'd been "singing with the wrong voice."

George Shirley recalls, "One day, David brought me a tape and said, 'This is a friend of mine singing at a party. I want you to give me your opinion.' It was a voice singing soprano operatic arias, and very impressively. After a few minutes, I looked over at him and asked, 'Is this *you*?' "



*"Well, according to the scuttlebutt we're dead."*

THE prejudice against the countertenor voice is inherent in the term "falsetto," which is used to describe the singer's technique. "Look," Daniels tells me when I ask him whether his own voice sounds fabricated to him. "It's my voice. It's *me*. It's the way I was meant to produce a singing voice. I hate calling it 'falsetto,' because it doesn't feel false and it doesn't sound false, but the technical truth is that I use a falsetto approach."

Russell Oberlin, the leading American countertenor of the fifties and sixties, told me, "The falsetto voice is a head voice, a voice that's used with little or no chest resonance, totally head; but a falsetto voice is something else as well, an unnatural use of the adult vocal mechanism, a muscular adjustment of the throat, where you use only a portion of the vocal cords." Oberlin believes that falsetto singers aren't, strictly speaking, true countertenors. A true countertenor, he claims, is "a naturally high-placed tenor"—a category whose only member, as far as I can tell, is Russell Oberlin. When I remarked to Oberlin that Daniels speaks in a "normal" male register, he took this as further proof that Daniels was merely a gifted falsetto posing as a countertenor.

Daniels's falsetto can transport him with ease through much of the octave above the tenor's high C, but audiences will never see him don a kimono in "Madame Butterfly." Although he says, "I can be as campy as the best of them," he insists that he will limit himself to operatic roles written for castrati or countertenors, and the material from the song repertoire intended for male voice. (He did, however, sing Brahms's "Cradle Song of the Virgin" during his New York recital in as plaintive and straightforward an impersonation of a nursing mother as could be expected from a robust man.) "I'm a man," Daniels says, sounding weary from having to insist on the obvious. "I'm a masculine man. I'm not a damn hermaphrodite. To say that I have a woman's voice trapped in a man's body is to say that I'm a woman trapped in a man's body. That offends me."

Inevitably, Daniels must also contend with other questions about "masculinity." "The only expectation people have of a countertenor is that he's gay," Daniels tells me over breakfast one morning. The subject was bound to come up, and when it does, Daniels's charming professional manner becomes edgy. "Straight countertenors are few and far between, but they do exist," he says. His tale of learning to accept his "other voice" after a long, traumatized period of failure as a tenor, had struck me as a kind of model coming-out story, and he now admits, "For me, there is a feeling with this voice of being set free." Daniels has lived with a companion, a pianist he met during college, for eleven years, but he remains guarded about his private life. He tells me that he did not come out to his parents until he turned thirty. How, I ask, is it possible not to suspect that a man who sings soprano may be gay? Daniels won't respond to such a question. "*You're* being stereotypical now," he says, ending the discussion.

IT is through his singing that Daniels prefers to reveal himself. Indeed, his unabashed eagerness to hold back nothing during a performance is what may compel audiences to embrace fully this alternative brand of male voice. Daniels refuses to be dogged by the undercurrent of sentiment that holds his talent to be "abnormal." Katz, his accompanist, remarked to me, "It must be terrifying to walk out onstage and know that you're going to take your clothes off with the first phrase you sing, and that you risk either turning everyone off or turning everyone on. David does it every time."

However alien the countertenor voice sounds to unaccustomed ears, Daniels's singing makes a persuasive claim that, in the words of Chanticleer's Joseph Jennings, "a 'natural' voice is simply one that's produced by a human being." Daniels told me, "I've always had the confidence that once I sang for people, and they saw that I was serious and at ease with what I was doing, they would relax after the initial shock and accept me. I am what you see." George Shirley, his teacher, goes further. "There's nothing false about that voice," he says. "When I hear David, I start to think, Why doesn't *every* man sing like that?" ♦

## A CRITIC AT LARGE

# TUNNEL VISION

*Egon Schiele's demonstrative sex art made painting and pornography inseparable.*

### BY SIMON SCHAMA

In his custom-furnished cell in Hell, Egon Schiele decides he is ready for a fresh torment. He tunes in to Sister Wendy, television's art nun. It does the trick. She pours on the agony: the insatiable *bocca dentata* from which issues the softly trilling voice; the reverentially upturned eyes; the rapturously fluttering hands; the genuflections before the shrine of God's niftiest creation, the body. Schiele gnashes and seethes. "Pubic hair? *Lovely and fluffy*, is it? Listen, Sister, I *know* pubic hair. And let me tell you, it's no cotton candy. It's barbed bloody wire, it's thornbushes, for Christ's sake." "Oh, dear Egon," she smiles, sympathetically. "Are you still unhappy? Poor lamb."

Yes, Wendy, he still is. And if your own cup of pleasure ran over long ago, if the mere thought of another Monet or Picasso show makes you reach for the angostura, then the Egon Schiele exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art is just what the therapist ordered. And if after a few hours of peering at the genitalia of pubescent girls you begin to feel that a getaway weekend at Giverny may not be such a terrible idea after all, at least you won't be able to fault the curator of the Schiele show for a timorous installation. The image that greets you at the entrance sets the tone. There is Schiele himself, overlit, naked, and spread-eagled flat against the picture plane like a climb-down-the-wall toy, but with pieces of him missing—a half-consumed praying mantis, with hairy segmented limbs. Much of what's left of the body is not green, however, but a decorator shade of hepatitis yellow, with the exception of a single eye, the nipples, the navel, and the scrotum, which are all Pepto pink. And you don't need the Expressionist Handbook to Strong Emotions to tell you that Schiele is in the throes of a paroxysm of self-hatred, or that he wants, truly and deeply, for us to Share his Pain—which (this being Vienna) is also, of course, his pleasure.

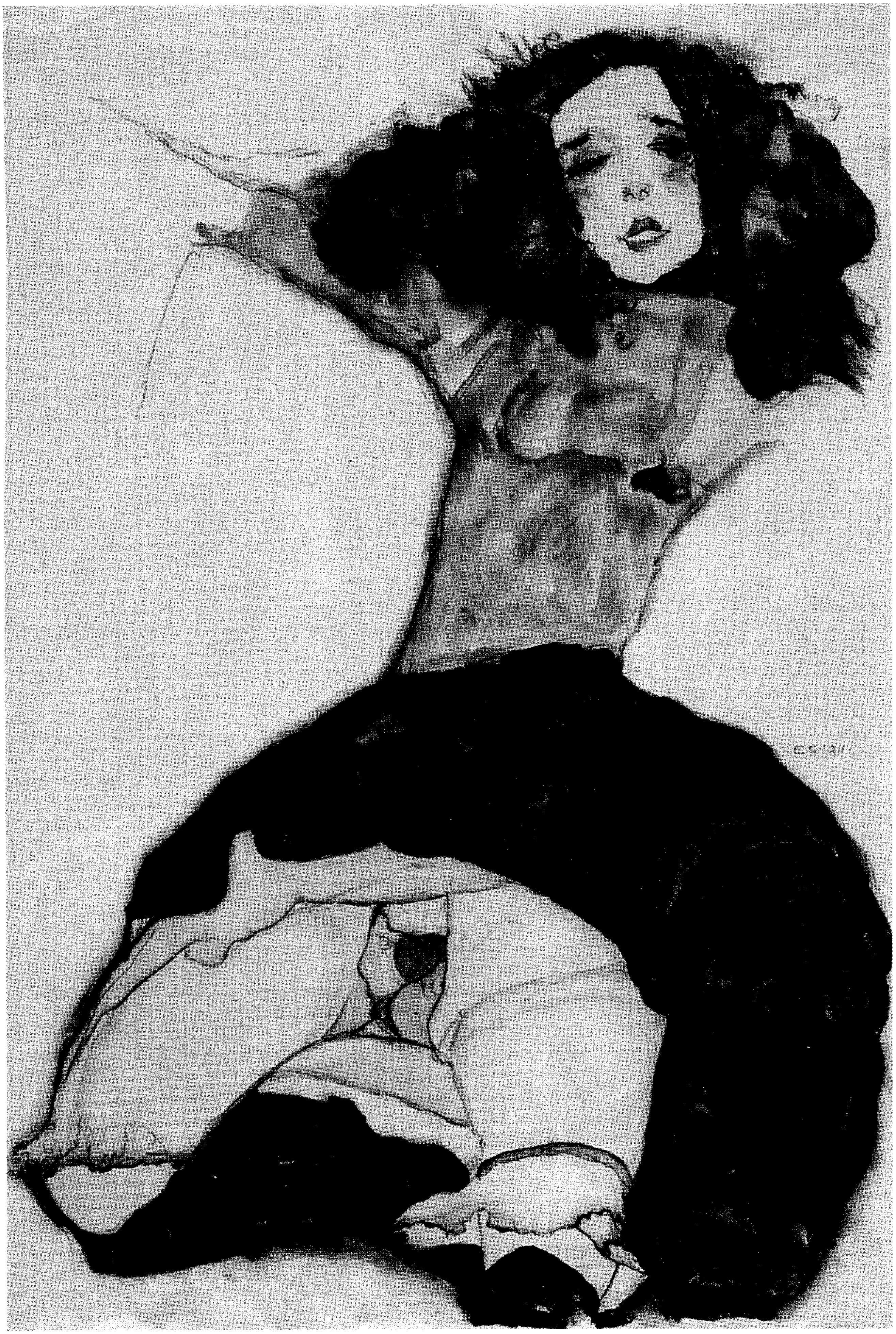
Since that image is by no means the most unsettling painting in the show, it's hard not to admire the pluck of the Central Bank of Austria, and also the Austrian Mint, which helped fund the passage of the Leopold Collection of Schiele watercolors, oils, and drawings from Vienna to New York. After all, it's not every bank (as the organizers of a similar show in London several years ago discovered, to their cost) that wants its corporate image attached to lovingly detailed images of pudenda and receptively proffered derrières. But then (as both the critics and some of the more apologetic defenders of the N.E.A. find it difficult to acknowledge) painting is not obliged to be Prozac on walls. Long before Bruce Nauman and Louise Bourgeois plundered the stockyard, artists like Goya responded to the political and military nightmares of their own time by doing a number on the classical tradition of the body, turning the Farnese Hercules and his buns of steel into slaughterhouse cuts. Goya's notorious 1820 dining-room painting, "Saturn Devouring His Children," with its obscene mutilation and dementedly splayed limbs, may well have supplied the template for Schiele's comparably tortured self-image.

A century after Goya, Schiele's generation of Austrians was formed less by the experience of war than by the expectation of it. (Ironically, many of the best and brightest of the fin-de-siècle rebels—including Gustav Klimt and Schiele himself—were wiped out in 1918, not by mustard gas or mortars but by the influenza pandemic that took more lives than had been lost on all the battlefields of the First World War.) Long before the Austro-Hungarian monarchy's terminal Bosnian-Serbian crisis, however, it was apparent that the monarchy was already at war, principally with itself. The patchwork quilt of nationalities, religions, and language groups which had been held together by loyalty to the Hapsburgs was coming apart at the seams as the King-Emperor Franz Josef declined from venerable to gaga. The conflict of classes in major cities like Vienna was threatening to go revolutionary. But the most unsparing campaign of all was being waged within the minds of individuals: an exchange of fire between the shell-shocked trenches occupied by the ego and the id.

Born in 1890, Schiele was an early casualty of those end-of-century onslaughts. His childhood reads like an Arthur Schnitzler story, featuring all the standard ingredients of Mittel-

*Egon Schiele in 1911, and (opposite) "Black-Haired Girl with Raised Skirt," 1911. Schiele is at his best when he is most self-indulgently puerile.*

COLLECTION ALESSANDRA COMINI; GALERIE ST. ETIENNE; PAINTINGS: THE LEOPOLD COLLECTION, VIENNA ©1997 MOMA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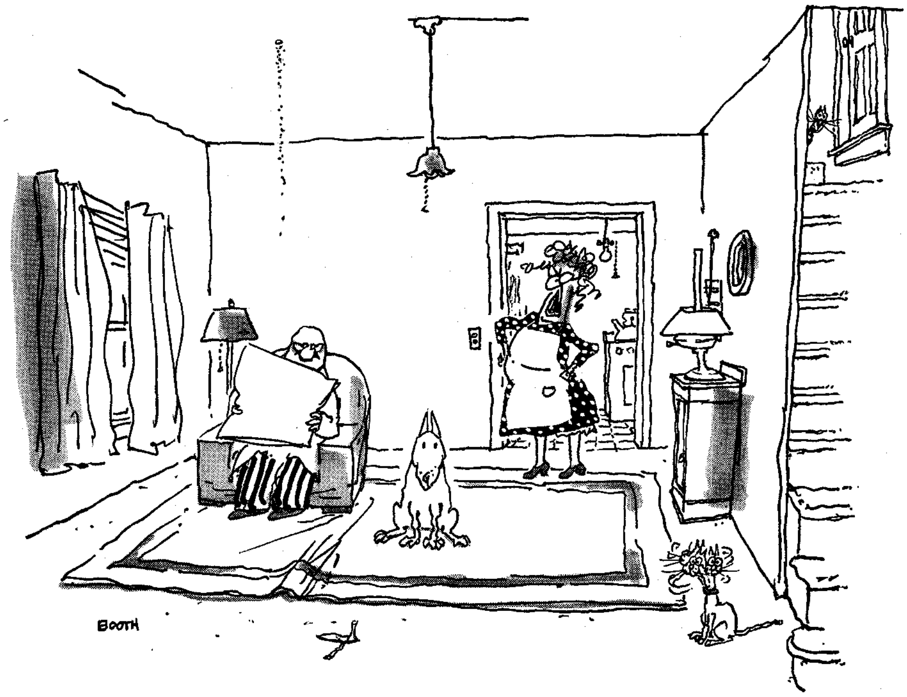


*"I can rise from the ashes like a phoenix only so many times!"*

• •

europa neurosis: betrayal, disease, dementia, and attempted suicide. His father, Adolf, was a stationmaster in the small town of Tulln, eighteen miles up the Danube from Vienna. He had married Schiele's mother, Marie, when she was just seventeen, against the wishes of her Czech family, and had then thanked her for her loyalty by spending the wedding night in a Trieste brothel and promptly passing on to his bride the syphilis he contracted there. Marie subsequently delivered three stillborn boys and a girl who died in childhood before Egon and his two sisters arrived. Sickly himself, Egon grew up watching his father drop steeply into insanity. Adolf would don his stationmaster's uniform and greet imaginary guests while the trains, closely observed and sketched by the gifted boy, rattled past on their way to Linz or Vienna. In 1904, dismissed by the railroad company, Adolf tried to kill himself and botched the job, but he died anyway, later that year.

Not surprisingly, then, much of Schiele's short life was punctuated by recurring acts of Oedipal rebellion. When he was sixteen, he reënacted (symbolically, one hopes) his parents' contaminated honeymoon by running off to Trieste with his twelve-year-old sister, Gerti, who frequently posed naked for him; they spent the night together in a hotel room. Soon after this escapade, he defied the veto of his uncle by taking the entrance examination for the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, and was enrolled as the youngest student in the entering class of 1906. Once there, he made no secret of his loathing for the obstinately conservative program of instruction provided by Professor Christian Griepenkerl. The feelings were mutual. "The devil has shat you into my classroom," Griepenkerl is alleged to have said, and three years later Schiele and his friends in the newly formed Neukunstgruppe sent the professor a letter of defiant protest and walked out of the academy. Schiele's mentor in this little insurrection was Klimt, whom Schiele had first encountered in 1907, and who had invited him to show four paintings in the Kunstschau of 1909. By this time, Klimt had become the patriarch of Viennese modernism. A decade earlier, together with like-minded colleagues, he had broken from the official art institutions of the court and the city, establishing the Secession, a home for independent-minded artists, designers, and architects. Its house style was predominantly (though not exclusively) an Austrian variant of the decorative naturalism of Art Nouveau; its mission was to purge Vienna of the disingenuously correct portraiture, laboriously historical tableaux, insipid landscapes, sentimental genre paintings, and *Sacher Torte* nudes that had previously passed for polite taste.

The Secession succeeded so well that by 1905 it had become subject to the usual laws of modernist fission, splitting those like Klimt and Otto Wagner, who saw their future as an alliance of painting, architecture, and design, from those of the Nur-Maler group, who wanted painting to be entirely free of the decorative arts. When Schiele became Klimt's protégé, Klimt was totally absorbed in his profusely ornamental, heavily symbolic, sexually charged paintings, in which vampirish succubi and their rapturously dream-clogged partners dissolved together in orgasmic baths of gold.

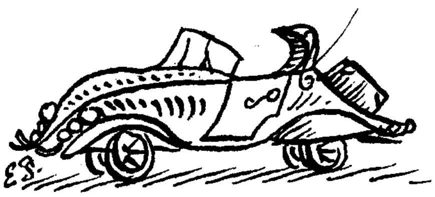
The powerful impression that Klimt's work made on Schiele is documented in some of the early paintings in the Leopold Collection, most obviously in the 1908 "Nude Boy," languidly masturbating on a gold-and-bronze Jugendstil coverlet, his penis stirring through a mop of bright-green pubic hair. Even at this early stage, though, it's apparent that Schiele will himself secede from the great seceder, since the strongest element in his composition is not color or texture but line. Instead of enclosing the body in multiple layers of decorative pattern, Schiele has rendered it as a flat, two-dimensional form, so that the sharply angular outlines of arms, trunk, and knees create their own abstract, dancelike rhythm. In related drawings, all done in 1909 and 1910, he takes this anti-ornamentalism (somewhat akin to the architect Adolf Loos's crusade for the plain) much further, stripping away the last remnant of decorative or figurative background, and tracing linear shapes against a featureless void, often on ordinary buff wrapping paper.

Albert Elsen has suggested that Schiele must have been influenced by Auguste Rodin, who had been conspicuously exhibited in the first Secession show, in 1898, and whose own erotic drawings had been shown in Vienna in 1908. Rodin had practiced and promoted a style of continuous drawing in which the artist looked uninterruptedly at the model while his sketching hand wandered freely over the page in a single movement, sometimes travelling off the paper altogether, and creating incomplete or arbitrarily truncated contours. He had made great claims for this new method, arguing that it liberated figure studies from the artificial tradition of mechanical drawing and allowed the body, as it were, to draw itself along the sinuously fluid line. It seems probable that Schiele, too, meant to recover an unmediated, spontaneous relationship between artist and model, including an overtly sexual connection, which had been expressly prohibited in academic art training.

WHATEVER Schiele's initial debts to Klimt or to Rodin, by the end of 1910 he had developed a manner that was unmistakably original. Its confrontational, occasionally sophomoric sexuality was of a piece with polemical writing then circulating in Vienna which attacked the hypocrisy of a culture that sent its bourgeois girls to convent schools and then displayed them for the marriage market in tight-laced corsets and bustles, all the while pretending that the female sex was by nature passively receptive. Against this piety, a number of writers begged to differ. The pseudo-biologist Otto Weininger, for example, in 1903, had published his "Sex and Character," in which he unblushingly asserted that "the female principle is . . . nothing more than sexuality," and that "the condition of sexual excitement is the supreme moment of a woman's life." Weininger, who was Jewish himself, mysteriously equated this voracious fecundity with the "Jewish principle" (thereby insuring an appreciative audience in a city where the mayor, Karl Lueger, was a notorious anti-Semite). Female carnality was held responsible for the neurosis that Weininger saw dominating contemporary culture and that he believed could be held in check only by the weak barrier of male rationality. This was, in fact, simply the most modern version of ancient foolishness, reiterated at least since the Renaissance, when misogynist writers had solemnly proclaimed women to be governed by cool, wet humors that drove them to warm themselves over the fires of lust. But male insecurities in prewar Vienna were acute enough to give theories like Weininger's temporary credibility, especially following his suicide in Beethoven's rooms—an act that guaranteed his instantaneous beatification as a cultural martyr.

The twenty-something Schiele could hardly have missed the mordant writing of Karl Kraus, either—the editor of the periodical *Die Fackel*, who likewise believed that women were defined by sexual passion but magnanimously argued that those "tender fantasies" exercised a benign rather than a malign influence on social norms. Both Weininger and Kraus (and, for that matter, the good doctor-author Schnitzler) concluded that the institutionalized repression of bourgeois marriage was designed either to stifle female sexuality or to divert it into prostitution or adulterousness. Along with Oskar Kokoschka, Schiele was obviously eager to join the company of these self-consciously aggressive uncoverers, and some of his strongest works—like the paper-doll "Kneeling Girl in Orange-Red Dress," with one eye collusively covered by a hand, the other staring provocatively at the beholder as if rehearsing a seduction—should be read as erotic attack pieces, meant to puncture the convenient delusions of bourgeois propriety.

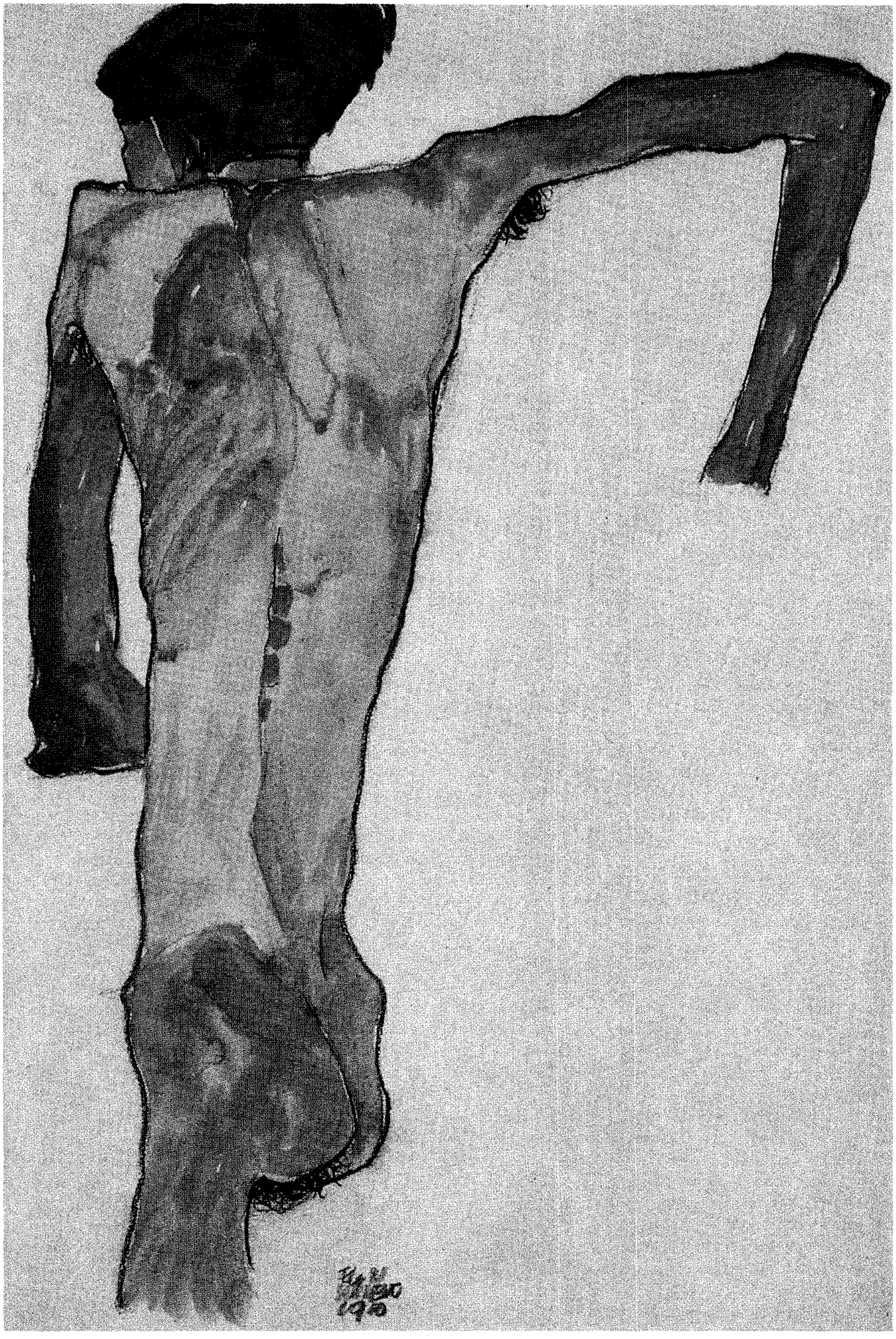
Schiele also brought other pungent ingredients into his demonstrative sex art. His theatrical, often brutal vehemence, for example, owed something to much older Renaissance traditions of Austrian and German art, not least the tradition of compulsive self-examination and erotic morbidity. But the elaborately stylized contortions of Schiele's emaciated figures are apparently more directly modelled on archaic sculpture. It was this Dionysiac art that fascinated the immediately prewar generation of artists and iconographers as a "barbaric" corrective to what they saw as the suffocating rationality of the liberal élite. The celebration of primitivism made itself felt everywhere in Central and Eastern Europe's metropolitan culture: in the theatre, in the concert hall, and especially in performances of mime and modern dance, whose choreographers tried to represent the imagined body language of "natural" men and women. One of Schiele's close friends, Erwin Osen, was a mime artist, and Schiele drew him going through contortions with a clownishly colored face, pipe-cleaner arms, and colossally enlarged hands—a disconcerting cross between Nijinsky and E.T.



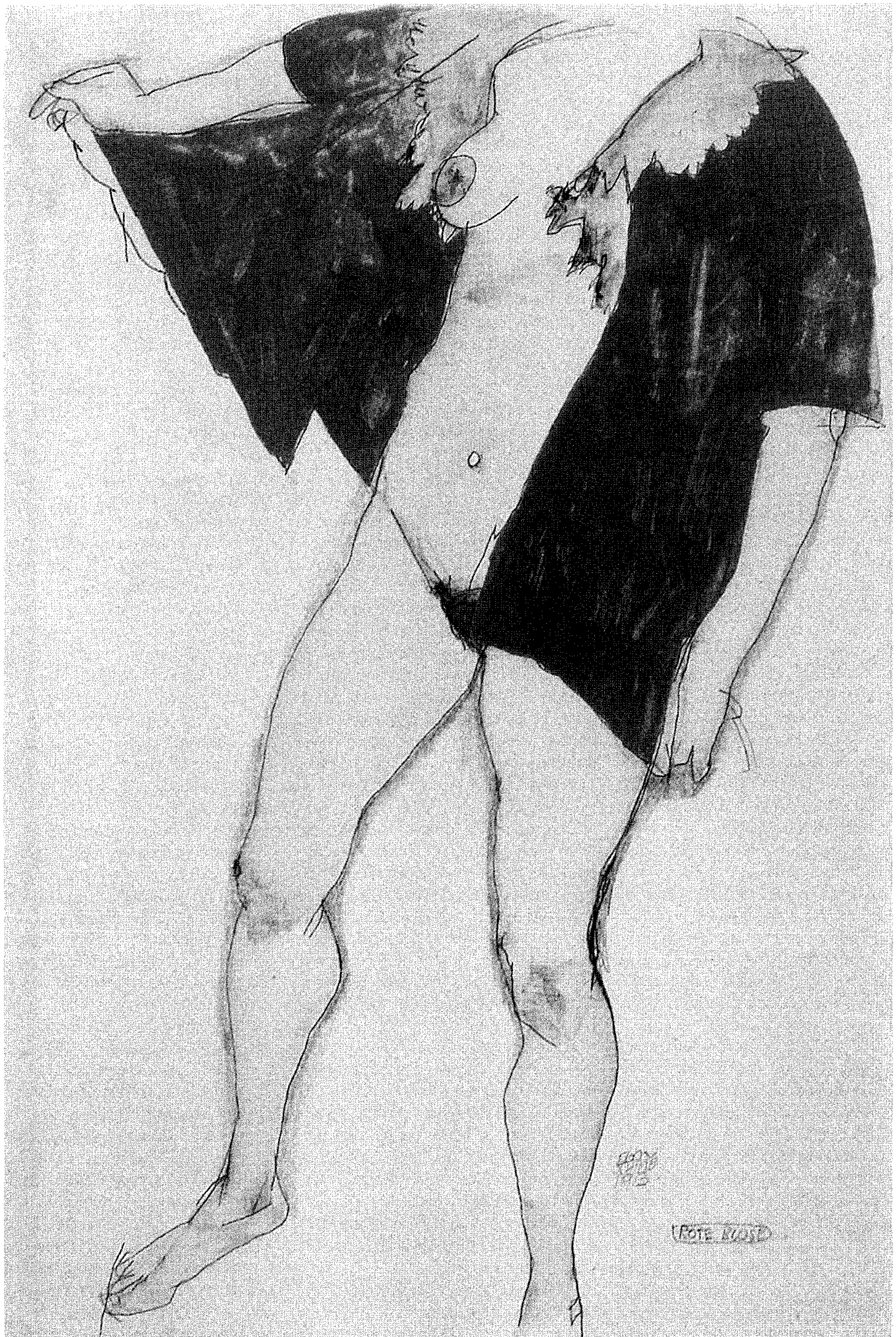
Much of this seems uncomfortably hysterical, and was, of course, meant to be. Some of the most disconcerting gesticulation in Schiele's work, including his own grotesque grimaces, may have been translated from photographic studies of the mentally deranged. His colors turned similarly neurasthenic. He favored raw, sharp tones, laid on in deliberately clumsy stains and dabs, the entire painterly performance becoming as aggressively combative as his subject matter: a pair of legs tinted deep blue and purple; a pregnant woman's belly rising greenishly above the dense black mat of her pubic hair; the labia of a twelve-year-old (or possibly younger) girl haloed by a wash of white gouache, her face tinted yellow.

Had enough? Well, Schiele, in fact, has barely got going. And as he hits his stride and the genitalia count starts to mount—as his angle of vision goes down and the distance between painter and model closes to a nose length—the language of MOMA's exhibition catalogue turns in desperation to the decorous conventions of artspeak, becoming ever more formalistic in the face of increasingly outrageous subject matter. It's unrealistic, I guess, to expect the audio guide to murmur breathily, phone-sex style, and invite viewers to "check out the especially well-defined, luxuriant pubic tuft—the dazzling painterly ingenuity with which Schiele has manipulated the fabric to suggest labial frill." But it's odd to stare right into the flame-tinted vagina of "Red-Haired Girl with Spread Legs" and to be told by the catalogue, "The colors in the work are especially delightful. Schiele juxtaposed the various shades from gray to black with those from orange to red—not to mention the touches of green in the skirt—and finally the white of the undergarments to the black and red. . . . The foreshortening of the face, although only lightly drawn, is masterful."

For once, "masterful" is indeed the mot juste. And while Magdalena Dabrowski, the author of the catalogue, concedes that "Schiele shows himself to be obsessed with sex" (the understatement of the season), she tiptoes around the serious implications of the extraordinary images on the walls, carefully avoiding hav-



*"Nude Leaning on His Elbow, Seen from the Back," 1910 (left), and "Red Blouse," 1913 (right): Some of Schiele's strongest works shoul*



*e read as erotic attack pieces, meant to puncture the delusions of bourgeois propriety in Vienna at the beginning of the century.*

ing to address the violence done to the autonomy and integrity of women's bodies, or whether those images are in fact pornographic. Of course, merely to whisper the "p" word in the company of the artocracy is to risk accusations of betraying Culture to the congressional ayatollahs who are bent on annihilating the N.E.A. So Schiele's black-stockinged working-class girls, one of whose skirt is pulled up to display her "sex, peeking out from her white underclothes," need to be carefully classified by Dabrowski as "erotic depictions without any of the trappings of pornography," only because they have been officially sanctified as Museum Objects rather than as mechanical aids to sexual arousal. Even to insist on the distinction, however, is to impose on Schiele precisely the aesthetic high-mindedness he obviously ached to violate. It's the virtue, not the vice, of his work that it is engaged directly with the relationship between art and sexual excitement, and much of his strongest work does exploit the standard tactics of voyeuristic pornography. It keeps its models half dressed so that the voyeur gets to experience, in visually surrogate form, their enforced dishevelment. Poses are struck which signal the availability of the body to the penetrating gaze. The budding sexuality of immature girls and the embraces of lesbians are made objects of specialized but compulsive interest. And the faces of the visually colonized are almost always sketchily summarized, while their genitalia are minutely observed, often with attention-grabbing color tints and accents. Like Rodin, Schiele was a lot less disingenuous than his connoisseurs were about whether the production of these images was indistinguishable from sexual acts, so that it became not simply permissible but actually essential to his campaign of demystification to represent himself as sexually aroused. I don't mean to suggest that MOMA should replace its mid-exhibit study tables with Eighth Avenue-style darkened private booths (if any have survived the Disney midtown jihad against lust). But to deny the lewdness of Schiele's art is to do him no favors, for that is precisely where he concentrated its potency.

IN 1911, already something of a celebrity in a Vienna hungry for enfants terribles, Schiele decided that he wanted "to be alone . . . to taste dark water, and see crackling trees and wild winds," and removed himself and his mistress, Valerie Neuzil, to Krumau, in Bohemia, his mother's native town. For a while, he did manage to change his tune somewhat, painting dense, slablike Expressionist canvases of the town (variations on a late-Gothic altarpiece in the Schottenkirche in Vienna), with its streets full of piled-up houses. Krumau was also the place where Schiele's father had attempted to commit suicide, and during Schiele's stay there images of mortality start to visit his work with ominous regularity. In one particularly disturbing oil painting, Schiele is embraced from behind by an incarnation of Death, modelled as a paler likeness of himself—or, conceivably, as his father.

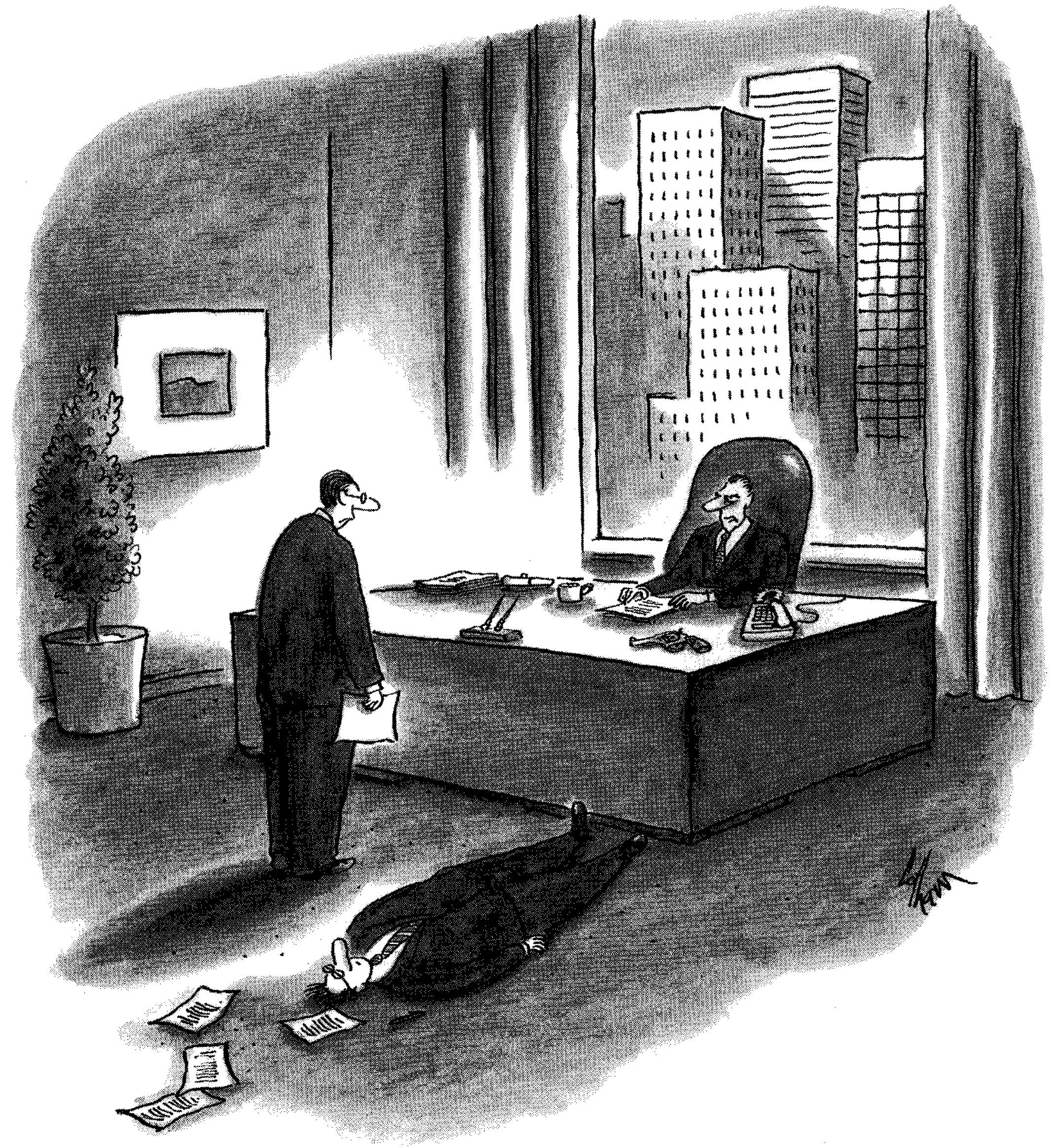
Inevitably, though, Eros caught up with Thanatos, and the local burghers caught up with Schiele. Run out of Krumau for hiring adolescent and prepubescent girls to pose in the usual generous manner, Schiele and his mistress moved to the town of Neulengbach, twenty miles west of Vienna. There, in response to a complaint lodged by the father of one of his underage models, he was arrested and tried on charges of seducing a minor. That charge was proved groundless, and although it was clear that Schiele had never laid a hand on any of his young models, he was convicted on a secondary charge of "distributing obscene drawings," based on his having exposed children to the "indecent images" in his studio. Though the judge solemnly burned one of the offending drawings at the trial, he commuted the maximum penalty of six months' hard labor to just three days in prison (on top of the three weeks that Schiele had already spent in custody awaiting trial). The art-historical literature has treated Schiele as a classic modernist martyr to stuffy provincial philistinism, echoing his own verdict: "To restrict the artist is a crime. It is to murder germinating life." But it's hard to commiserate uncritically with his bewildered outrage that anyone could possibly take offense at his asking thirteen-year-olds to spread their legs for his graphic benefit.

That Schiele was traumatized by the incarceration is evident from self-portraits done in 1912—in particular, the savagely chiselled "Self-Portrait with Hunched and Bared Shoulder," where his head, with its palsied mouth and huge wet eyes, twists violently over a shoulder, as if in parody of a coquette's pose. There is more than a trace of self-pity in many of these images, and it nudged Schiele toward a slightly laborious symbolism in which he reappears in proxy forms: as an autumnal tree, for example, stripped of its leaves by a howling gale. (Two pictures in this vein were based on a famous Segantini painting, shown in the Secession and called "The Evil Mothers," which Schiele made over into a self-portrait as bent twig.) Schiele also figures as, inter alia, a randy cardinal kneeling against the body of an unnerved nun; a half-naked "preacher," his head bent to observe, with strange dispassion, his own arm extended phallically from his groin; and a medieval saint, draped in purple and crowned with a nimbus of shrieking lemon yellow. But, notwithstanding this burst of eroto-clericalism, Schiele's brush with the law decisively altered his art. Much of the excessive posturing and sophomoric reaching for shock disappeared, to be replaced by a tougher, spikier drawing style and a much stronger sense of modelled forms. Instead of slavishly fetishizing the vulva of a fourteen-year-old, Schiele turns the bodies of recognizably mature women into strong, self-contained images, often indirectly viewed (from behind or above), the models either oblivious of the artist or actively returning and challenging his gaze. The extremely beautiful "Nude with Blue Stockings Bending Forward," with its shock of golden hair atop a classically arched back, could almost be a study for one of Kiki Smith's powerful sculptures.

Had Schiele grown up and calmed down? Not quite. By 1915, he had dumped his mistress and married Edith Harms, the daughter of a machinist. Dabrowski, in describing his "Nude with Raised Right Leg" (clad in scarlet stockings)—an image in which the head is again stylized but with summary, caricatural lines and buttonhole eyes, as if he were sketching for Brancusi—reports, with apparent relief, that "even her labia have been toned down, an unusual touch for Schiele." He may not have been ordinary enough for the Austro-Hungarian draft board, which initially deemed him unfit for military service, but by 1915 the Imperial Army was inclined to take anyone who could stand up, and reversed its judgment. Schiele was allowed to serve, albeit a long way from the hell of the Russian or the Italian front—either in Vienna, where a major retrospective of his work had opened, or at a camp for captured Russian officers. Doing his bit for the Fatherland did not, of course, preclude his producing the usual quotient of gaping vaginas, lesbian couplings, and even (at last) a heterosexual copulation in which Schiele, his face glazed and dumb, leans over a red-haired lover like an oversize rag doll dropped between her thighs. A few of these late watercolors and drawings are powerful; many are nondescript; almost all seem to have been affected by a belated classicism, as if the Good Soldier Schiele felt at last that he had to stand to attention when the past-masters spoke. Especially depressing are large oil paintings in which Schiele has clearly attempted to give his nudes a statuesque, iconic monumentality. So we have Schiele, stranded somewhere between Cézanne and Picasso, doing his Expressionist makeover of the Three Graces or the Rokeby Venus.

In February of 1918, Gustav Klimt died, and Schiele, forsaken by his last and perhaps most burdensome father figure, made three very beautiful drawings of the dead artist and soon afterward published a memorial tribute to him. Later that year, no fewer than two hundred works on paper by Schiele and his New Art Group were shown in Prague and Dresden. And it was at just that point, when he was becoming the principal eminence of Austrian painting, that he died of influenza, only three days after his wife.

He was twenty-eight years old. Inevitably, the temptation in reviewing a career so drastically abbreviated is to speculate on how he might have continued—whether, for example, he would have become a mentor for the New Objectivity, whose uncompromising rawness he seems to have anticipated. But as you go around the final galleries of the Leopold Collection show you don't get the impression of a talent that, despite a looser, stringier line, was restlessly searching for a radical new vision. It's possible, in fact, that if Schiele had lived his most original work would have been behind him. For the really awkward fact about Egon Schiele is that he was at his best when he was also at his most uninhibitedly and self-indulgently puerile. One of the most memorable items in the Leopold Collection is a self-portrait drawn at the age of twenty but depicted with the high-colored cheek and rosy ear of an adolescent at least five years younger. Still more extraordinary, and more uncompromisingly elemental than any of the pudenda parade that would follow, are Schiele's two drawings of a newborn baby boy. In one of them, the infant, with swollen eyelids, gropes blindly forward on his knees. In the other, he lies on his back like a pink bug, belly distended, one leg waving helplessly over the alarmingly outsize scrotum, which, for once (as parents know), the artist has no need to exaggerate. Nothing Schiele ever did summarized more exactly his painful vision of the human condition: from the cradle to the grave, an infantile, myopic, and helpless imprisonment by the tyrant libido. ♦



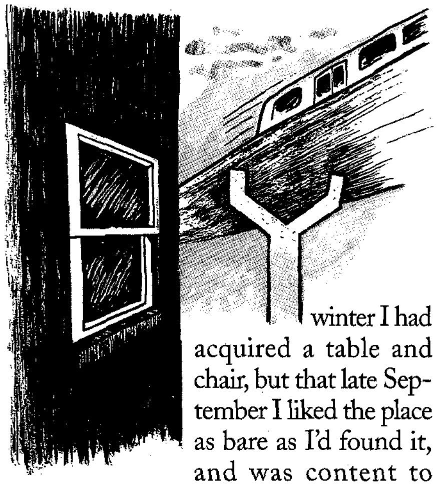
*"Why can't you be more like Hutchinson? You don't hear him complaining."*

### FICTION

# LUNCH AT THE LOYOLA ARMS

*Why did she tell him such things?*

### BY STUART DYBEK



winter I had acquired a table and chair, but that late September I liked the place as bare as I'd found it, and was content to spread my lunch on the white kitchen windowsill and eat while staring out at the street below. The street was bounded by the El tracks and a neighborhood cathedral, the name of which I didn't know. It was a shadowy Chicago street, with the amplified quiet of a dead end, except for the occasional clatter of the El and, at noon, the uniformed kids from the Catholic grade school playing during lunchtime recess in the cul-de-sac. The cross-tipped shadow of the steeple which crept along the pavement seemed to add an eerie dimension of echo which made the lighthearted banter of their voices sound all the more riotous.

The window I sat propped in had been painted open. White paint slapped over cobwebs still foamed in the corners of the sash. Tiny white worms of paint uncoiled from the hinges of the kitchen cabinets when I opened them. I'd snapped a butter knife prying at the painted drawers, trying to stash the silverware I'd borrowed, along with a pair of salt and pepper shakers, from a cafeteria.

The entire apartment wore this fresh coat of white, through which the signs and inscriptions that generations of former tenants had left behind—bottle rings, phone numbers, initials carved into the woodwork—slowly reëmerged. I wondered who my former neighbors were, tried to imagine all that might have happened here, but there were no ghosts, no histories other than what was waiting to happen, merely two unfurnished rooms, empty except for my saxophone case and portable typewriter, and the suitcase, heavy with too many books, that I'd dumped at the center of the floor.

The place was called the Loyola Arms Hotel, although it obviously hadn't operated as a hotel for years. The rusted, burned-out neon sign in front had never been removed. It was my first apartment. This was in the mid-sixties, and the rent was cheap, but still beyond my means after my friend Stash, who was a Trotskyite that year and was to have been my roommate, moved into a place across town, closer to the University of Chicago, at the invitation of a Thai girl he'd been seeing. I didn't blame him.

Had we split the rent as planned, I could have made it to next spring—at least by my most optimistic calculations—stretching out the money I'd managed to save while living with my parents. They'd been uprooted from Chicago to Memphis, when the plant where my father had worked for thirty years shut down and moved South. My father had managed to get me a job in the foundry with the same company down there—a situation I was desperate to escape.

So I left and came back to Chicago, ostensibly to return to school, and moved in anyway, imagining that I could live off the city like some form of urban wildlife—alley cat, rat, sparrow. I thought I could slip between the seams like the homeless foreigners who'd roamed through the South Side neighborhood where I'd been raised. I'd grown up unaware that I'd been studying them: tramps, bag ladies, panhandlers scavenging the alleys in summer like beachcombers; old black hoboes fishing along the Sanitary Canal; urban hermits like the bearded mute known only as the D.P., who lived in a cave hollowed out under a sidewalk on Twenty-first and Washtenaw, or the Mexican known as the Pigeon Man, who lived with the pigeons, in a nest of cardboard cartons that he'd wedged among the girders of the Western Avenue bridge.

My plan was to live on Cheerios and baked potatoes. How much money did one really need, after all? Supermarkets offered free samples and bruised fruit. There were books and records in libraries, paper and pens in banks, toilet paper and paper towels in public rest rooms, soap and socks left in laundromats. There was Army surplus and Goodwill. It was September in America, days hazed in gold, streets lined with the largesse of produce stands and flower stalls; the city, to quote Stash, loaded with bargains at the world's expense. "In this country," he said, "what amounts to merely surviving off the crumbs would be a life of privilege most anywhere else on earth."

But my lunches were becoming extravagant. Picnics on a windowsill: braunschweiger, Jewish rye, mayonnaise, raw onion, potato salad blushing with paprika, a cold beer, an enormous garlicky sea-green pickle tonged just minutes before at the corner deli by a young woman with high cheekbones and a Slavic accent, her golden hair standing from turquoise combs that could hardly contain the weight of curls, ample breasts so loose they had to be bare in the sleeveless blue sundress she wore, and the blond hair growing profusely under her arms flashing as she dipped into a huge glass crock where a school of kosher pickles darted away and tried to hide amid the dill weed, roiled seeds, and wheeling peppercorns.

Did she realize looking at me when she seized a pickle and, raising it victoriously, smiled, that there are times in a life when the natural, humble hair beneath a woman's arms can seem like a forbidden promise?

I'd walk back to the hotel, my lunch tightly wrapped in white butcher paper sealed with the strip of brown tape she'd licked. It was windy that fall and the

FILIP PAGOWSKI

neighborhood smelled of whitecaps off the lake. The echo of noon bells from the church-locked street swirled in the vortex of doorways and mingled with the rasp of leaves and dust; pigeons and sheets of newspaper kited over the wooden platform of the Loyola station. The blind accordion player in an abandoned newsstand caught my arm as I passed, saying he smelled garlic.

"Take me to the turnstiles," he said. "It's so windy I can't hear where I'm going." And when I left him at the entrance to the El he started pumping out notes just as the northbound train slammed overhead, like a part of the song catching up. Late at night, through the painted-open window I could hear the El train, stations away, rocking over the hollow viaducts of the North Side—Argyle, Thorndale, Granville, stops with names like English butlers—as I lay on the twangy, flop-out Murphy bed that a girlfriend called "the debilitated bicep of the Loyola Arms."

Well, not just a girlfriend. She was the same girl who told me that she'd faithfully kept a diary from the time she was a child, but that now she wrote down nothing, because recording things as they happen—exactly as they are—means that one is merely a journalist, and she was living her life like a novel.

"The Great American Novel?" I asked, but before she could answer I guessed that, no, it was probably a Russian novel—pages of drifting snow, suffering, endless vodka-addled philosophical arguments, and at the end an appendix, with a family tree, that was necessary in order to follow the generations of characters with their unpronounceable names, names that required you to move your lips while reading.

She said that she didn't know what kind of novel it was, because she—then she changed that to "we"—were only on Chapter 1. She said it without the least bit of irony, and though that frightened me a little, I liked her all the more for it.

"You may have noticed we have different thought processes," she said.

"How so?"

"I love the connections, the overview of novels. And you . . . you think that life is a Great Moments collection. Look at all these undernourished-looking books of poetry." She gestured to where my typewriter sat on the platform I'd erected from a stack of library books. "How can you type sitting on the floor, anyway?"

"I'm living my life like a haiku," I said. "Syllable by syllable."

"The best teacher I ever had in high school once wrote on one of my papers, 'Sarcasm is the final defense of the weak.' Anyway, is that saxophone just for décor or do you ever play it?"

"I'm practicing to be a musician of silence," I told her, quoting a line I'd read in a book of translations of Mallarmé.

She gave me one of those looks that says if there's one thing more tedious than being a bore it's being a pretentious asshole.

I knew she was impressed.

WE'D met in the New World, a socialist bookstore that had just moved up to Rogers Park after a mail bomb had blown out the windows of its former downtown location. Stash had told me that the owner, Lew Merskin, had fought in the Spanish Civil War. I'd wandered in on the evening of the first day I'd moved back to the city, and meeting her there seemed like a good omen.

Her name was Melody—but after our discussion about life as a Russian novel I began calling her Natasha, a name she seemed fond of. She had the soulful eyes to carry it off, though that soulfulness might have been enhanced by her violet eyeshadow. Her face was framed by her dark hair, and she constantly brushed wisps of it away from her eyes, and away from our mouths when we kissed.

I didn't have a phone and I'd never know when she was coming over, or if she was coming at all. The day we'd met I'd told her where I was living, never expecting her to drop by, especially when she didn't even offer her phone number. All she'd told me was that she lived in Evanston.

Later, she mentioned that she was attending Northwestern, which I'd assumed, somehow, but I never found out where she was living, whether alone or with a boyfriend, in a dorm, or at a sorority house she was embarrassed about. Or was she slumming and didn't want her friends to know? Once, when I asked her how I could get in touch, she said, "Let's just leave it this way for a while—both free, O.K.?"

"Fine by me," I said.

The lobby buzzer didn't work. I lived on the top floor, down a dingy corridor with burned-out overhead bulbs. There'd be a knock at my door—I never quite learned to recognize her knock—and a chemical change too intense to control would surge through me. If it turned out to be merely one of my friends, Stash or Doolin, I'd feel foolish standing there at the door with a pounding heart. But sometimes, usually in midafternoon when she'd cut class and take the train from Evanston, it would be Melody, looking Natasha-like in the black raincoat she wore whether it was raining or not. Jeans or a denim skirt, blouse opened at the throat and underneath a colored bra—violet, ivory, mint, smoke, rose, Capri. A bra from what she referred to as her Italian-underwear hobby, which she blamed on the corrupting childhood experience of collecting wardrobes for her Barbie. Whatever the color of the day, I'd hang up the bra on my saxophone.

When the flop-out bed began twanging melodiously beneath us, the old woman in the apartment below would beat the ceiling with what I guessed was the handle of a broom.

"I wonder what chapter *she's* on?" I said.

"That's sad, not funny," Natasha said.

"At least my typing late at night never seems to bother her."

"And what is it that you're typing so late?"

"Maybe *my* diary."

"Oh really, and do you write about us? About this? How do you describe it?"

"Well, I usually start out, 'Dear Diary.' "

"I wouldn't know what words to use," she said. "Certainly not the clinical ones, but not the dirty ones either. And certainly not the bodice rippers. 'Throb' or 'tumescent.' 'Tumescent'—God, that's disgusting."

"I thought diaries are supposed to be private, like confession."

"No fair. I share my stories with you."

It was true, she'd tell me stories—strange, amazing stories like the one about her first real sexual experience when she was a freshman in high school in a suburb outside Cleveland. It happened with a college boy named Angelo who was painting the condo where she lived with her family. Not that she and Angelo actually did anything much but talk, she explained, but the things they talked about were a sin. Simply talking with Angelo was more intensely erotic than what she called mashing, which came later, with high-school boys. He was the first man who made her realize that men could be beautiful, and once she saw that, Angelo was all she could think about.

He'd tease her, refer to her as Lolita or Ms. Jailbait, and his voice would drop

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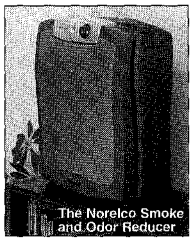

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and he'd begin a litany of what he'd like to do if she were legal. Once, when he was painting the inside hallway, she brought him an ice-cold Coke and he climbed down from his ladder—the way she described it made it sound like Michelangelo descending from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel—and took a long swig, then kissed her with his ice-cold lips. It was the first kiss for which she opened her mouth. Lips still cool, he kissed her throat and down her body. It was summer, and she was dressed in a halter top and shorts.

"If you were a woman, this is how I'd kiss your breasts," Angelo said, kissing gently through her clothes. "And this is how I'd kiss you here," he said, dropping to his knees.

"Jeez, what a pervert," I said.

There was more. She woke the last morning that the painters were there to find that Angelo had lowered the scaffold outside just to the level of her bedroom window. He perched there, five stories up, looking in. "I was watching you sleep," he said. She remembered that she was wearing shorty pajamas of a nearly transparent cotton.

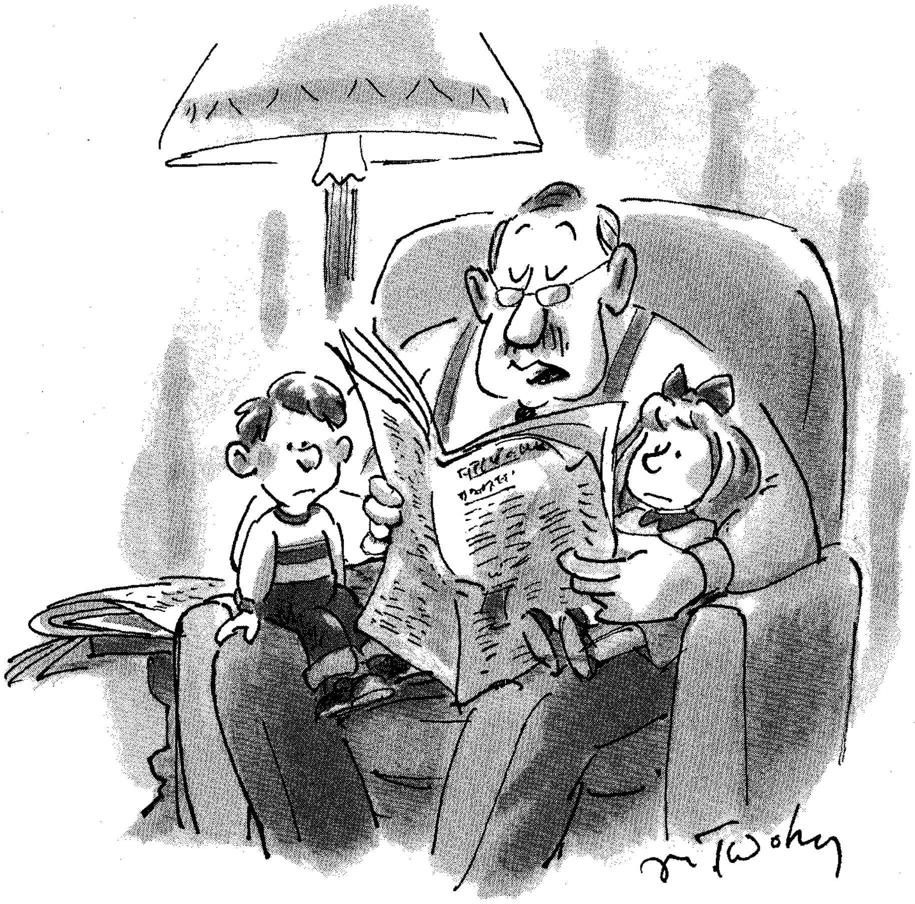
"What would you do now if I wasn't here?" he asked.

She got out of bed, yawned and stretched, and then unbuttoned her pajama top.

"Thank you," Angelo whispered. "I'll always remember you in the morning light." Then, he reached in past her curtains with his paintbrush and very lightly drew a streak of white paint down her chest.

She stood for what seemed an hour under the shower, letting the water slowly wear the paint from her skin.

All through her next year in high school, she told me, she'd unexpectedly feel that streak of paint, and feel the almost irrepressible urge to open her blouse and see whether it had reappeared—an urge so strong that if she was in class she'd slip her fingers between the buttons, touch her skin and check her fingertips for paint. And if she was at home she'd stand before the mirror and unbutton her blouse, pretending that Angelo was at the window, watching her.



*"Mr. Culner is survived by his wife, the former Janice Dexter; one son, Horace, Jr.; and three grandchildren."*

Sometimes, looking into the mirror, she told me, she'd be startled to notice that tears were running down her face.

"And why were you crying?" I asked.

"Because I'd heard that while he was painting another building Angelo fell to his death."

"Probably, peeping at someone, paintbrush in one hand and dick in the other, he lost his balance," I wanted to say.

All her stories were about firsts. That first *real* sexual experience with Angelo, the first time naked with a boy in a hotel room (that was at the State Forensic finals in Dayton and the boy, a forensic powerhouse known and feared as Motormouth, turned out to be more awkward and shy than she was); first time with a woman—Maria, a defector from Hungary, who was hired as the gymnastics coach at the all-girl Catholic high school during Melody's junior year there; which led, in a weird way, to her first time with a divorced man—the Langian psychotherapist to whom she was sent during the scandal about the gymnastics coach which ensued after Melody's mother read the diary in which Melody had recorded the entire lesbian encounter with Maria. After that, Melody stopped keeping a diary.

There was a price to pay in all her stories. The therapist, she said, simply turned up missing one day—later they learned he'd disappeared into a religious cult—and the overmatched naked boy in the hotel room won State and went on to Nationals, only to crack during the finals and attempt suicide.

"What about that teacher who wrote about sarcasm on your paper?"

"What about him?"

"Did he die, too?"

"What's that suppose to mean?"

"Accidents, death, deportation, disappearances, madness, suicide, and all that before Chapter 1. Some prologue. It doesn't bode well for me."

"I wouldn't worry," she said. "You're obviously a survivor."

"I'm just glad it's a novel and not a diary we're talking about."

"I guess I shouldn't have told you."

"Hey, I never said I didn't like listening to your stories."

"What's to like, anyway?"

"I like the line from your high-school teacher. I like the one about how, after the first time a girlfriend described oral sex to you, you had a dream about it so intense you woke and, gymnast that you were, tried having auto-oral sex."

"God! Why do I tell you such things?"

"To drive me crazy?"

THERE'D been a knock one night, too late to be Natasha. A little late even for Stash.

When I opened the door, Doolin, returned from Europe, stood there holding two enormous jugs of Paisano the way a traveller stands balanced between suitcases.

"I heard you were back," he said, stepping in, looking around appraisingly. "Very understated."

"I'll give you the grand tour. This is the kitchen."

"A little breezy, no? But I love the way that tree branch is growing in through the window. Good place to hang your hat."

Which, in Doolin's case, was a beret. His worn gray corduroys were now supported by a pair of green suspenders. He'd only just returned, he said. Europe had wiped him out financially and for the time being he was living at his mother's.

"Man, you should've come," he said. "Winding cobbled streets out of a Pissarro painting. You got any glasses around here?"

"They're on back order."

We sat, backs to the wall beside the window, passing the gallon jug of thick, dark Paisano. With each swig, wine dribbled down Doolin's red beard and beaded off the chin hairs onto the frayed collar of his shirt. He was telling me about Paris, about visiting Debussy's house off the Avenue du Bois-de-Boulogne, as I'd asked him to. He'd gone to Debussy's grave, as well, at the cemetery at Passy, and left a flower for me. Then, after Paris, it was on to Rome, riding the train that runs along the coast past Nice, and Bordighera—names of fantasy places picked up from the paintings we'd stood before at the Art Institute.

"I got off at Rapallo because Pound went crazy there."

Outside, an El streamed by, a strip of blue-lit film. It was on the train through Italy, Doolin said, after the stop at Rapallo, that the flash of a single word came to him like a revelation and he realized it was the name of a literary magazine that he had to start: *Obscurity*.

"Hmm," I said, but not enthusiastically enough. "What are you working on?" I asked, changing the subject.

"Mayakovski," Doolin said. " 'A Cloud in Trousers'—a new translation for our generation."

Back braced against the wall, he slid

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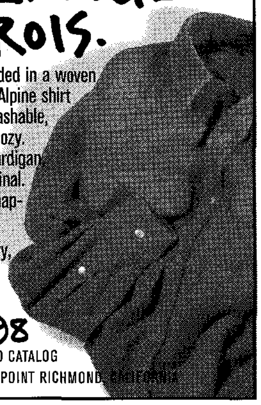

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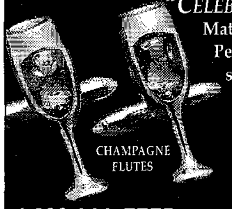

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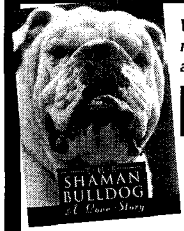

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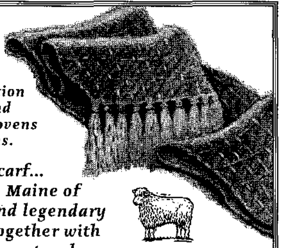

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up to a standing position to recite, the slightest hint of a Russian accent edging into his voice:

> There I go, looking cool.
> I'm twenty-two.
> Get off the street, motherfuckers.

"That's Mayakovski?"

"Is now." He unzipped his fly and took a leak out the window. "Very convenient setup you have here," he said.

He paced to the typewriter that sat on the living-room floor, ripped out the sheet I'd been typing when he knocked, and read aloud in the booming Welsh-inflected tones of a Dylan Thomas record:

> You, me, a secret concealed like a baloney-and-cheese sandwich smuggled in a secretary's purse as she rides the express to work, something she wants to devour now, that makes waiting for lunch impossible—I'm famished like that, or as you say ravished, when you mean ravenous, and lunch turns out to be a kiss, a speck of mustard on your lips.

"Perfect for *Obscurity*," Doolin said. "I'll be your first publisher. You'll be in good company with Mayakovski. Who is she—the woman with the mustard on her lips?"

"Dark-eyed gymnast," I said. "She defected—from Ohio."

"I got it!" Doolin cried.

"Got what?"

"*Obscurity and a Speck*?"

"YOU said," she wrote me one day, "that you won't feel you really live here until you get a letter. Can I tell you a story about a journey to which a woman has become somewhat addicted? I could draw a map with the stops at the stations along her way: Howard, Jarvis, Morse—those good English-butler names—but a map wouldn't tell how far she really travels, or how it feels to wait at the edge of sunlight on a wooden platform in the company of pigeons to board the train.

" 'Hello again,' she tells the pigeons. Hello again, she tells herself.

"Picture the shades along the route in the apartment buildings that face the tracks, all drawn, golden in the sun, no other window standing open like yours. It's two in the afternoon and the city feels almost deserted, everyone at work or school, and here she is alone on an Indian-summer day, coat off, that lilac bra visible through her white blouse which is reflecting light like a golden shade. Usually you raise it slowly, but sometimes let it fly from your hand.

"She never goes the back-alley way even though she believed it when you told her that it's a Parisian street by night. She's loyal to the way she came the first time, when she felt a little lost. Can you imagine what she felt?—the crazy chance she was taking?

"Do you believe she actually came—walked past the phantom Doorman, past the Desk Clerk, who, if there were one, would be dressed in black like the Desk Clerk in 'Heartbreak Hotel,' you know—one of those guys who's 'been so long on lonely street they ain't ever gonna look back.' And the Bellboy in his little suit would be a wizened old man by now.

"She climbs the stairs with their carpeting worn from countless footsteps, some of them hers, and makes her way down a corridor that's dark even in midday. Do you believe *this* story—you who were so worried to find yourself in Chapter 1, as though beginnings aren't always the best part?

"Consider this a letter, although it's turning into a flashback. Doesn't every novel need one? Do you have them after she's gone? What words do you use to describe the two of them when you think of times together like that afternoon it stormed?

"This flashback is like a déjà vu I have each time I climb the stairs again: an image of that woman, standing as she did the first time, wondering whether to knock, listening at your door. On the other side she can hear wind, an El train going by, chiming bells, an interval of silence played by a saxophone at rest."

THE afternoon it stormed, it seemed as if we were able to make the rain go faster. Her moans like a countdown; her lilac-painted fingernails pinching her pink nipples. Had she painted them to match her bra?

There seemed always something new to invent between us; even after she'd gone, there was always one more thing I wanted to tell her. I wanted to tell her what I'd heard the first night it turned cold—the kind of crisp, breath-steaming cold that I'd sometimes tried to imagine during days back at the foundry in Memphis. In summer, the workday there would begin at five in the morning, in an attempt to deal with the heat; by nine we'd be popping salt tablets.

Shivering on the flop-out bed, wound in the bedspread, I was trying to read to the sound of Mr. Davi, the Albanian janitor, who was trying to get the heat going. I pictured him in the furnace room whacking with a crowbar, as if he could beat the stubborn old furnace into action. On one occasion when I'd been doing my laundry in the basement, Davi showed me his collection of the flotsam he'd skimmed from the garbage he hauled—skin magazines, compromising photographs, lacy panties. Having shared this confidence, he wanted to know about college girls.

"I should have gone to college and become a doctor or an engineer," he said. "But I came to America instead, and now look."

Davi and his family lived in the basement apartment, behind what sounded like a half-dozen locks, as if they were expecting the K.G.B. At least it felt that way the one time I'd knocked on his door to ask if he could come up and help me get the window unstuck. It was Melody's theory that Davi pounded the pipes to convince the tenants that the cold radiators were on—"the psychosomatic heat of the Loyola Arms," she called it. She called him "Salvador Davi, the surrealist janitor" after he'd opened the door on us one afternoon.

I wasn't even aware it'd happened until, later, Natasha said, "You're a cool customer."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"The janitor comes in and you never missed a beat."

"Mr. Davi?"

"Who else? A paunchy guy with a mustache, standing there with a crowbar. I waited for you to say something. He just stood with his mouth open watching us mating, and finally gave this apologetic little bow and turned and went quietly out the door. You didn't notice?"

"You think I would have simply continued?"

"See, I misread you. You're a romantic after all."

Wrapped in a bedspread, listening to the psychosomatic heat that first night in fall when the wind off the lake smelled of its glacial past, I recalled a grade-school day in Indian summer. I was returning to school from lunch, taking a meandering, roundabout way and trying to work up the nerve to cut that afternoon and hang out on the railroad tracks with Stash, when I saw the alkies were back. They'd been away. Trucks would come to the neighborhood every fall and take them off to Michigan to pick apples. Now they were back, with bags of apples and money for booze, gathered around a hydrant that trickled water along the side street of broken glass where old cars were dumped. Some of them lived there during the summer, sleeping in junked cars the way campers might use a tent. The street dead-ended in the 3V's Bird Food Factory, and from the factory's screened windows came the exotic cries and chatter of parakeets, canaries, mynahs, and Java birds singing out, perhaps in response to the excited twittering of sparrows that were bathing in the sky-reflecting pond that spread from the hydrant.

I wanted to tell her how after a while, when the radiators stopped their metallic knocking, I'd heard another dull pounding—one I hadn't heard for weeks—and I'd begun to wonder if I'd ever see her again. It was the old woman in the flat below, banging with her broom handle the way she did those afternoons when the two of us, Natasha and I, were in bed again. This time, alone, I sat perfectly still upon the bed. Thump, thump, thump it continued, until I began to wonder if she was trying to communicate through some code. I decided that if she was healthy enough to stand on a chair and pound the ceiling with a broom, it couldn't be an SOS. Maybe she was simply a little cracked, like whoever that voice belonged to which I could sometimes hear travelling up the pipes in my bathroom late at night, repeating the same keened, nearly unintelligible phrase, *"Don't you wanna? Don't you wanna?"* Although it could just as well have been someone calling a name—"Donna"—over and over.

Night brought out moans like that in the old hotel, sounds I hadn't noticed at first. Maybe they were ghosts; maybe they were flashbacks, moans left behind. If so, I had my own to contribute: the way she looked that afternoon when we heard the windblown slant of rain beating glass panes and pattering on the linoleum in the kitchen. "As if the floor was tile," she said later. Racing against my ear, her breath became part of the hiss of rain, her hands rose to her breasts, pinching her nipples, making herself cry out again and again. True or not, I wanted to tell her that I knew why the old lady pounded the ceiling. Because she was lonely. What we'd assumed was raps of disapprobation was actually applause. ♦

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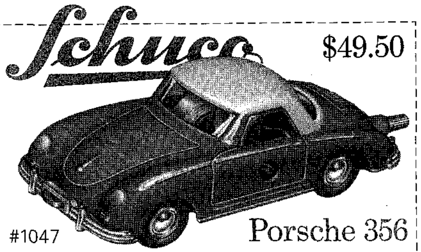

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# REEL HISTORY

*Why John Quincy Adams was the hero of the Amistad affair.*

BY GORE VIDAL

IN December, coming to a theatre near you: Steven Spielberg's "Amistad." The explicator of the Holocaust turns his compassionate gaze upon the peculiar institution of slavery, deferring yet again the high hopes of Armenians that their tragic story will be screened by the *conscience de nos jours*. Meanwhile, a press release from the Lyric Opera of Chicago tells us that, "by remarkable coincidence," November 29th will see the world première of an opera, "Amistad," by Anthony Davis, with libretto by Thulani Davis. What, then, is the "Amistad" affair that we now have so much of it?

In early 1839, Portuguese slavers kidnapped several hundred West Africans for shipment to the slave markets of Cuba. Among them was twenty-five-year-old Joseph Cinqué, from Sierra Leone, a British colony where slavery had been abolished. Cinqué's wife and three children had no idea what happened to him: he simply vanished one day from the rice fields where he worked. During the two months that it took for the slave ship to sail to Cuba, a third of the captives died. But Cinqué survived the trip, with every intention of freeing himself or dying in the attempt.

Although the Spanish king had outlawed the slave trade in 1817, his Cuban governors continued to sell the services of Africans to local planters, while a mere ninety miles to the north of Cuba slavery was not only legal but a triumphant way of life in the Southern states of a republic whose most eloquent founder had proclaimed that "all men are created equal"—except, as is so often the case in an imperfect world, those who are not. But by 1839 organized opposition to slavery was mounting in the North of the United States, to such an extent that, in twenty years, there would be a fiery disunion of South from North, and civil war. The case of the young rice farmer from Sierra Leone proved to be the first significant shot in that war.

In Havana, two Spaniards, José Ruiz and Pedro Montes, bought fifty-three slaves, paying four hundred and fifty dollars apiece for the adult males, among them Cinqué. The captives were then herded aboard the schooner Amistad to be transported to Puerto Príncipe, the Cuban town where they would be sold. Below deck, Cinqué found a nail and broke the lock on his iron collar. Then he freed the others. Mutiny on the Amistad had begun. Captain and cook were killed, and two sailors leaped overboard. Ruiz and Montes were taken captive. Cinqué spoke no Spanish; he also knew nothing about navigation. But he did know that when they came from Africa they had sailed into the setting sun, so now, to return home, he wanted the course set into the rising sun. Through sign language, he instructed Montes, who took the helm. But Montes tricked him. In the daytime, he would let the sails flap, making little headway; then, at night, he headed north to the Mecca of slavery, the United States. After two months, the ship ran out of food and water off the coast of Long Island.

When Cinqué and several men went ashore to forage, they were met by the local inhabitants. Once Cinqué was convinced that these white men were not Spaniards, he offered them doubloons to take them all home to Sierra Leone. But by then an American man-of-war was on the scene, and the Amistad, with its human cargo, was taken not to a port in New York, where slavery had been abolished, but to New London, Connecticut, where slavery was still legal.

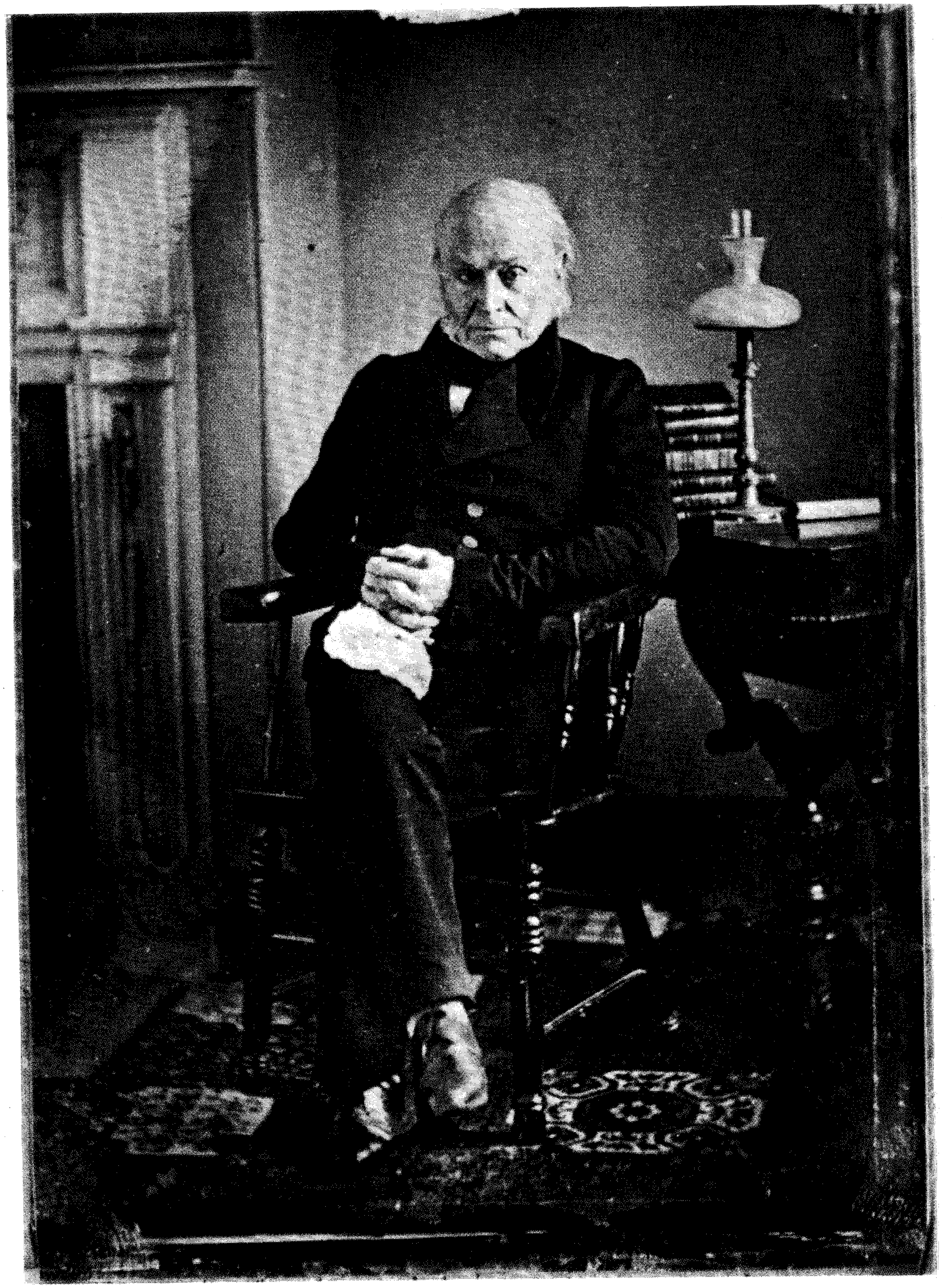
At first, Cinqué and his comrades got a predictably bad press. They were pirates—*black* pirates—who had murdered captain and crew. (Happily, personality and appearance have always meant more to Americans than deeds, good or bad, and Cinqué was unmistakably handsome, "son of an African chief," the press sighed—a young Sidney Poitier.) A Connecticut judge promptly put the new arrivals in the clink and bound them over to the next grand jury of Hartford's United States Circuit Court.

AT this point I said to Jean-Jacques Annaud, the director with whom I was discussing how to film "Mutiny on the Amistad," in 1993, "What do we do with the dialogue? For almost half the picture Cinqué and the Africans don't talk in English, while Montes and Ruiz speak Spanish. That means an awful lot of subtitles." He was unperturbed. As it turned out, Annaud and I did not make the picture, but now Spielberg has, and I'm curious to see how he handles dialogue in the "action" sequences. The opera in Chicago, one reads in the press release, will be "sung in English with projected English titles," a somewhat inspired solution.

It was the last half of the Amistad story that most intrigued me, although the sympathetic Cinqué hasn't much to do at this point. The story turns into a titanic legal struggle at whose heart is the explosive question: Can slavery be permissible in a nation ostensibly founded on the notion that all men are created equal? More to the point, the United States was the last among civilized "white" nations to maintain the institution rightly called peculiar. That is the real story back of the "Mutiny on the Amistad," the title of a first-rate study by Howard Jones (Oxford, 1987). Coincidentally, I should mention that there is also a new book called "Amistad," the work of a journalist named David Pesci (Marlowe; $22.95). The publishers refer to it as "a page-turning novel," a true novelty for the Internet's jaded readers; and it comes to us with high praise from one Roberta Flack, the "singer, songwriter, and entertainer." Apparently, Spielberg has not used Mr. Pesci's book as a source for his movie.

WHY bother now with this long-forgotten incident? Because it shows a black man who wins—a rarity in the age of slavery. Cinqué gets to go home, as he intended all along. He outsmarts the government of the United States, and in this enterprise he is aided by one of the most remarkable men in our history, the sixth President, John Quincy Adams. After one unhappy term (1824-28), Adams was defeated by Andrew Jackson, who is best remembered for driving Eastern Indian tribes to "res-

CULVER PICTURES



*John Quincy Adams, circa 1848: "He is an old roué who must have sulphuric acid in his tea," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote.*

# BRIEFLY NOTED

THE DEVIL'S CHIMNEY, by Anne Landsman (Soho; $24). This first novel, narrated by the alcoholic, semi-deranged Connie Lambrecht, brings to mind the parabolic prose of Alice Munro and the scarifying vision of J. M. Coetzee. It is set amid the ostrich farms that flourished, more than half a century ago, in colonial South Africa. Landsman's hold on the crux of her story (the fate of the missing, both dead and alive) is so steady and strong that her fey, haunted characters seem to act entirely out of their own compulsions.

BOMBSHELL, by Joseph Albright and Marcia Kunstel (Times; $25). Archives opened since the end of the Cold War have brought few revelations more disturbing than this: the American scientist who gave the Russians invaluable information about the atomic bomb was never arrested, and now lives in England. Possibly because the traitor, Ted Hall, agreed to speak freely with the authors, they see merit in his justification: that by denying America a monopoly of atomic weapons he preserved world peace. His further justification—that the Russians were our allies—loses persuasiveness against the book's panorama of Soviet espionage.

SMELL: THE SECRET SEDUCER, by Piet Vroon, with Anton van Amerongen and Hans de Vries; translated from the Dutch by Paul Vincent (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23). In a highly informative addition to the small but potent body of olfactory literature, the authors make the case that the nose is rarely given its due. The prose is unflinching, and is imbued with deadpan charm. Thus, in a section called "Quantity Affects Quality," we are told, "The perfume industry makes frequent use of indole, a compound that forms the basis of skatole, the substance that makes feces stink. In low concentrations, however, indole smells of flowers."

KILLER INSTINCT, by Jane Hamsher (Broadway; $25). In a very funny Hollywood coming-of-age story, Hamsher and Don Murphy—producers fresh out of U.S.C. film school—learn to swim with the sharks after optioning an edgy screenplay by an unknown writer named Quentin Tarantino. Tarantino becomes famous and tries to renege on the deal; Oliver Stone, at the height of his "JFK" success, becomes the director; and the film becomes "Natural Born Killers." Before long, the producers are confronted with a production that seems just as insane as its ostensible subject matter.

RED SIGNATURE, by Mary Leader (Graywolf; $12.95). These poems resemble pieces of fine prairie architecture: they're eclectic, practical, and capable of large vernacular gestures, and they do an odd, upright justice to the infinite, faintly undulating landscape stretching away around them. Leader owes some of her intimacy with the American sublime to Dr. Williams but much more of it to her own quite remarkable sensibility, which is one of the most self-possessed in contemporary poetry.

---

ervations" west of the Mississippi and for his wild destruction of the Bank of the United States, which led to several years of financial chaos. But Adams was destined for greater things than the Presidency. He became the permanent scourge of what he called the "slaveocracy."

Of all our forgotten Presidents . . . As I write that line, I recall what the wife of a film director once said to a journalist who was writing yet another in-shallow study of the late Grace Kelly. Inevitable question: "How many of her leading men did she go to bed with?" Gracious response: "It might save us both time if I were simply to skip to the ones that she did *not*." Now, in a somewhat similar context, when I speak of forgotten Presidents I refer to just about the whole line. Although the names of the four on Mt. Rushmore are not entirely unknown to Anglophone Americans, the rest of the cavalcade is very dim indeed. At the time of John F. Kennedy's assassination, it was discovered that ten per cent of the American people had never heard of him. It was not until the televising of his proto-Dianesque funeral that they were put, at last, in the picture. Of course, we're now up to forty-two Presidents, and more than two centuries have passed since the first one. Even an attentive, politically minded person would have trouble keeping them all straight. Nevertheless, with a history as murderously fascinating as ours, it is truly a marvel that, year after year, History is found to be the least popular subject taught in high schools. Certainly, it is the least well absorbed.

Adams. "Amistad." Spielberg. If the film—an action thriller, I suspect—works, people will, for a few months, learn of J. Q. Adams and his fierce brilliance in the matter of race. Since there is no longer any possibility of actual American history ever being taught in the public schools—and not all that much penetrates the private ones—the only way our history will get to us is through movies and television. Unfortunately, on the rare occasion filmmakers put a horny Jurassic toe, as it were, into controversial waters, the result is muddied. Some years ago, television made a fine mess of the Adams family, turning four generations of our most interesting family into costumed dummies. Lately, the estimable Ken Burns turned his attention to the mind and landscape of Thomas Jefferson. Despite the presence of several fine historians onscreen, the result was chloroform. Any attempts (at least mine) to note significant flaws and contradictions in Jefferson's character were carefully removed. In regard to Jefferson, J. Q. Adams himself might have been called as witness. He found dining with Jefferson exasperating, because of what Adams called his "prodigies," a polite word for lies of a Munchausen splendor. When Jefferson was in France, he claimed that the thermometer remained below zero for six weeks; then he shyly confided that on a trip to Europe he had taught himself Spanish. "He knows better," J.Q.A. groaned, "but he wants to excite wonder." And admiration, something no Puritan Adams could ever do.

CURRENTLY, "John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, a Private Life," by Paul C. Nagel (Knopf; $30), is being published—the first biography of J.Q.A. in a quarter century, according to the publisher, and the first "that draws upon Adams' massive manuscript diary." That journal is now available on microfilm; it is unlikely ever to be published in its entirety. But then four generations of the Adams family probably produced more words than any other family in American history, starting in 1755, when John Adams began *his* diary, and ending only with the death, in 1927, of his great-grandson Brooks, whose sketch of the intellectual tradition of the Adams family forms a preface to his late brother Henry's "The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma" (1919)—a title that suggests a not entirely sanguine view of our national development. Mr. Nagel feels that there is a mystery at the core of J.Q.A.'s life. It is true that family and contemporaries found him "enigmatic," a necessity for a hard-minded politician not about to give away the game. He was often accused of "disagreeableness." But *anyone* who takes on unpopular causes is bound not to agree with those millions who supported slavery, say, or who find risible the spending of government money to educate the people; Adams was much mocked by congressional yahoos when he called for astronomical observatories, which he poetically called "lighthouses of the sky."

Adams was the first President to be photographed—fourteen years after he left office. He was five feet seven, bald and stout, like most of his family—his father, John, the second President, was known as His Rotundity. Now I read that Adams is to be impersonated in "Amistad" by Anthony Hopkins, a solid, workmanlike English repertory actor, often excellent with a good English script like "The Remains of the Day," often not so good if miscast, as in "Nixon." But then it is always dispiriting that whenever a somewhat tony highbrow sort is to be impersonated, American producers, as vague about American class accents as about English ones, seize on British actors. I am sure that there are American actors more than capable of re-creating that sharp-tongued total New Englander J.Q.A. As Joe Pesci said when I joined the cast of a picture in which he starred, "I saw this list of all these English actors for the part of this Harvard professor you're playing and I said, 'Why do we always have to take an English asshole when we have one of our own?' "

ALTHOUGH the occasional screening of our history is probably the last chance we shall ever have to know something about who we were, a moving picture, because it moves, is the one form of narrative that cannot convey an idea of any kind, as opposed to a generalized emotion. Mary McCarthy used to counter dedicated *cinéastes* with "All right. In 'Battleship Potemkin,' what does that abandoned baby carriage bouncing down the steps *mean*?"

Worse, our writers and directors tend to know as little about the country's history as the audience, so when they set a story in the past the characters are just like us except they're in costume. But the past is another country, and to bring it to some sort of dramatic life takes a capacity for which there is no English word. It was not until the eighteenth century that a German, J. G. Herder, coined *Einfühlen*—the act of feeling one's way into the past not by holding up a mirror but by stepping *through* the mirror into the alien world.

For instance, we keep death out of sight, and out of mind, too. But the world of the Adamses was saturated with death: infants dead at birth; their mothers, too. Plagues took off whole families—memento mori on every side gave a dark resonance to their days. Words were also different for them. They looked upon words as deeds. Words defined the republic that the Adamses helped create. Words defined the role that the Adams family wanted our Union to play in the world. But convincing words are the one commodity that Hollywood cannot supply our predecessors, as American vocabularies shrink with each generation. "I don't do grammar," an expensive screenwriter said to a director friend of mine who had suggested that perhaps a highly educated English teacher in a film wouldn't keep saying "between you and I." Now that the action film's clattering machinery and vivid flames have crowded so much else off the screen, dialogue is more and more used as captions to pictures, to explain to slow members of the audience what they are looking at. Yet spoken language is not only the sum of a dramatized character; it is just as much action as a car crash.

John Quincy Adams spoke as follows on the Fourth of July, 1821: the true America "goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. . . . She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself, beyond the powers of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. . . . She might become the dictatress of the world; she would no longer be the ruler of her own spirit." This is a terrible truth that can still, I think, rock an American soul—if such there be, of course. It is also language that, chauvinistically, I would rather hear from Newman or Pacino or Hoffman than from an actor, no matter how gifted, not implicated in our curious enterprise.

The standard life of J.Q.A. remains that of Samuel Flagg Bemis (personally I prefer Marie B. Hecht's "John Quincy Adams," 1972). Mr. Nagel now gives us the inner man, based on the diaries that J.Q.A.'s son Charles Francis once cut down and edited to twelve volumes. Of his father, he said, wearily, "He took to diary writing early, and he took to it bad."

J.Q.A. was always something of a prodigy with words and ideas and concepts. When John Adams was made American minister to France, and then Holland, he took his son with him. An aptitude for languages combined with a natural eloquence made J.Q.A. a formidable diplomat. At fourteen, he was sent to St. Petersburg as secretary

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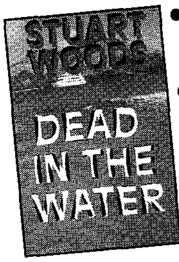

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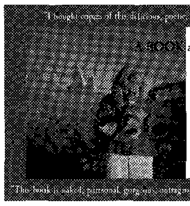

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to an American diplomat. After John Adams was posted to England, in 1785, J.Q.A. glumly gave up his exciting life to enter Harvard and prepare to be a lawyer. Even before we had a country, we had lawyers, who, in due course, gave us the Revolution and the Constitution, under which, in succession to George Washington, John Adams became President and moved to the village in the Southern wilderness named after his predecessor, where he and his wife, Abigail, camped out in the unfinished White House.

Although J.Q.A.'s mother is one of the first brilliant women recorded in our history, she was not at her best as a mother. She was cold, domineering, and insensitive. J.Q.A. had a good deal to put up with. She also proved to be the carrier of an alcoholic gene: J.Q.A.'s two brothers and, later, his two sons were all to die of acute alcoholism. J.Q.A. himself often confided to his diary that he had talked "overmuch" the night before and felt somewhat despondent the next day. Much of his famous depression (Nagel's "Rosebud" is that J.Q.A.'s irritable nature was due to manic depression) sounds to me like serial hangovers. Luckily, Adams married Louisa Johnson, a woman as intelligent as Abigail and far more amiable.

After Harvard, J.Q.A. listlessly tried the law. But he found his true métier as a polemicist. Under various newspaper pseudonyms, he supported George Washington's general policy of neutrality in regard to other nations. Washington's celebrated—and long ignored—farewell to the nation, warning against passionate friendships and enmities with foreign powers, was influenced by letters that he had read from J.Q.A., whom he had made minister to The Hague.

In 1802, J.Q.A. was elected to the Massachusetts legislature, and then to the United States Senate, where he proved to be disastrously independent. Though President Jefferson's personality got on his nerves—throughout Jefferson's career, Adams found his perfidy "worthy of Tiberius Caesar"—Adams supported Jefferson whenever he thought him right, particularly in regard to the 1807 embargo on American products to England and France, a retaliation for their wartime restrictions on United States trade. Since New England lived by trade with Europe, J.Q.A.'s support of the embargo so infuriated Massachusetts that he was forced out of the Senate before his term was up. But Jefferson's successor, Madi-

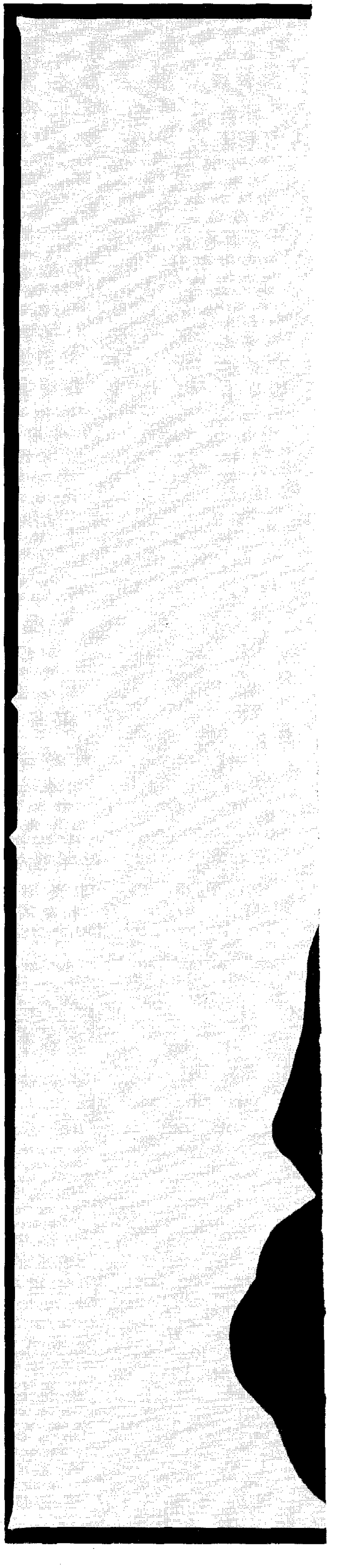
### SHOWCASE BY DAVID BAILEY

## MUSIC MAN

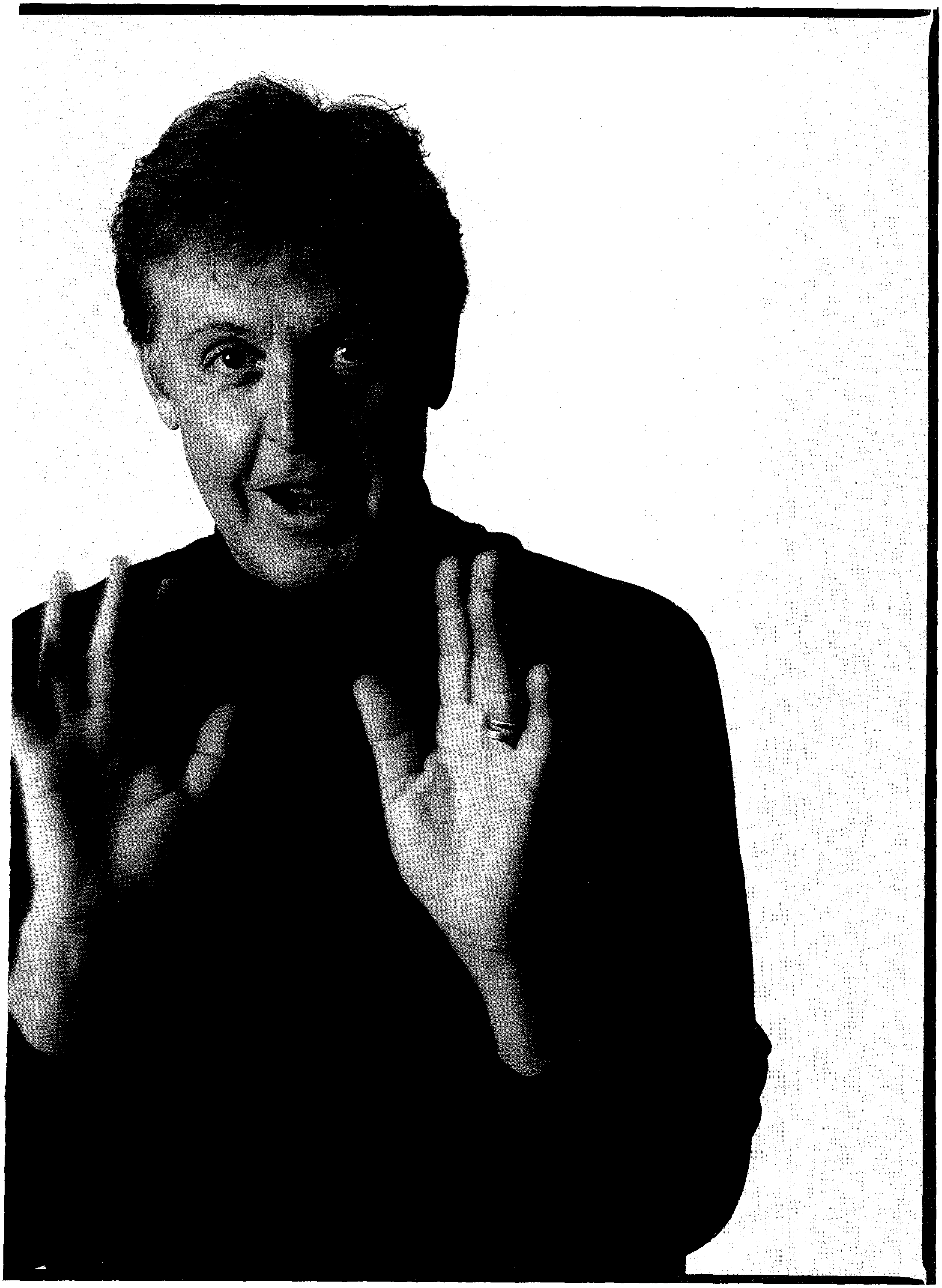
A GIFT for melody is so rare that, in revenge, critics call it a craft. Of all the great songwriters, few have had the gift so distinctly as Paul McCartney. Even fewer, perhaps, have seen it last so long: McCartney, like Irving Berlin, has managed to produce memorable tunes for a span of more than forty years. (It is probably no coincidence that the two are among the least trained of the great songwriters: neither could read or write music.) Through slumps and silliness, McCartney's melodies have never stopped coming, and they all still have the self-sustaining "Whistle me" quality they had when they first appeared, so many years ago.

A new, four-movement symphonic poem, "Standing Stone," which will be given its New York première November 19th at Carnegie Hall and has already become a best-seller on CD, is brought to a singing close by one more of those tunes. After much Celtic panting and mooing, the last movement begins with a striking nine-note figure in the brass, which eventually, after many journeys, resolves into a love song. It's a piercingly beautiful tune—not soaring but, rather, somehow floating, gently, above the heads of the musicians and into the hearts of its listeners. It's an English song. What one hears throughout "Standing Stone," in fact, is a nostalgic inventory of all the things, aside from rock and roll, that a musically absorbent and gifted teen-ager would have heard growing up in Liverpool in the nineteen-forties and fifties: Elgar and Vaughan Williams, church hymns, film scores. When the quality of the new work dips, as it does, oddly, in the more fevered passages, it sounds like the Russian-derived Dimitri Tiomkin-style music of fifties movies. When the quality picks up, as it does in the slower, chamber episodes, it sounds like English pastoral or, sometimes, Christmas music. Having written the soundtrack of the sixties, McCartney has now written a carol for the millennium. Melody has many uses.

—LUKE NICHOLSON



*Paul McCartney, London, 1997.*



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ACROSS
1 S(PACE) AGE
8 STAB (rev.)
9 ARIAS (hidden)
10 PILLAGES (*Segal* + *lip* rev.)
12 S + L(I)M
14 EA(S)T
15 SRI (LANK)A (*airs* rev.)
17 IN + CAN
18 DOES (*doze* hom.)
19 ENSNARED (anag.)

DOWN
1 STA(P)LE
2 PER + I
3 CHA(LE)T
4 A + T A G +LANCE
5 GA +VE IN (*Ag* rev.)
6 E + BBS
7 B(ILL S)IKES
11 PAR + TON (rev.)
12 STANZA (hidden)
13 MOANED (anag.)
15 SIDE (*sighed* hom.)
16 KATE (anag.)

son, made him the first U.S. minister to Russia, and then sent him to Ghent to negotiate the end of the War of 1812, and on to London as minister, where he stayed until he became Secretary of State to the new President, Monroe, for whom he drafted what is still known (even if it is no longer in force) as the Monroe Doctrine.

In those days, Secretaries of State tended to succeed their Presidents, and so J.Q.A. made, many thought, "a corrupt bargain" with Henry Clay. Although Andrew Jackson had got the most votes for President in 1824, he failed of a majority, and the election was decided in the House of Representatives, where the Speaker, Clay, gave Adams his votes. J.Q.A. began his Presidency under a cloud that got even darker when he made Clay Secretary of State. Four years later, when Adams was thoroughly defeated by the triumphant Jackson, he claimed to see a silver lining to this darkest cloud: at last he could go home, write poetry, plant trees, be a wise essayist, like Cicero. Instead, after a year of retirement he was so bored that he did what no other former President had—or has—done: he got himself elected to Congress. It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who got his number when he wrote: "Mr. Adams chose wisely and according to his constitution, when, on leaving the presidency, he went into Congress. He is no literary old gentleman, but a bruiser, and he loves the *mêlée*. . . . He is an old roué who cannot live on slops, but must have sulphuric acid in his tea."

Paradoxically, as a lowly member of the House, J.Q.A. had now entered upon the major phase of his political career: ineffectual President became impassioned tribune of the people. To make sure that slavery could not be debated, the Southern members had put in place a so-called "gag rule." For eight years, J.Q.A. fought the rule with all his wit and eloquence. Finally, in 1844, he got the House to rescind the gag rule. Of Jackson's 1837 removal of the Indians to the West, he noted, "We have done more harm to the Indians since our Revolution than had been done to them by the French and English nations before. . . . These are crying sins for which we are answerable before a higher Jurisdiction." As for slavery, he thought it "an outrage upon the goodness of God." One difference between then—so foreign to us—and now is the extent to which Christians actually

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believed in the Christian God. Where our politicians oscillate between hypocrisy and bigoted religiosity, they had, for better or worse, religion, something that takes a lot of *Einfühlen* for us to grasp. Needless to say, in 1846 J.Q.A. found morally reprehensible the American invasion of Mexico that would give us the Southwest and California.

FINALLY, the mutiny on the Amistad. The noble Lewis Tappan, a founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society, persuaded J.Q.A. to join forces with the lawyer Roger S. Baldwin to defend the by now thirty-nine Africans before the Supreme Court. A federal judge had agreed that the Africans were not slaves; rather, they were free men who had been kidnapped in order to be turned into slaves by Spanish Cubans, and their mutiny had forestalled enslavement. Thus far, the case was clear-cut. But, as so often happens in our affairs, a Presidential election had intervened, and Jackson's heir, Martin Van Buren, a smooth New Yorker who was eager to be reëlected with Southern votes, filled the air with arcane talk of laws of the sea and the complexities of international treaties, effectively stalling the release of the Africans. He also came up with a plan that would have sent them to Cuba for trial. What pleasure this might have given the voters of the South was insufficient to reëlect Matty Van, as he was known; he went down to defeat in November, 1840.

In February, 1841, the Supreme Court met to decide what should be done with the mutineers from the Amistad. J.Q.A. had not appeared before the Court in many years; had not, indeed, appeared in courts at all during his long periods of public service. He was nervous. He was also less and less master of a temper that was growing more terrible with age as he denounced equally intemperate Southerners in the House. Many thought his eruptions were not so much righteous as mad; and he himself prayed, in his diary, for "firmness to rule my own spirit."

Baldwin opened for the defense. The next day, a somewhat jittery J.Q.A. closed the defense. Over the years, despite a shrill voice, he had become a great orator; thousands came to hear him wherever he spoke—for seldom less than three hours. Now, in the dank subterranean Supreme Court, beneath the Capitol's Senate chamber, he faced a packed house, always an encouragement to a performer.

Five members of the Court, including Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, were Southerners. It was thought that they were inclined to send the Africans back to Cuba, in their double capacity as merchandise and murderers. Happily, one Southerner was too ill to sit upon the case and another died of a heart attack the evening of the day J.Q.A. finished his four-and-a-half-hour defense. Baldwin had already questioned the jurisdiction of the Court in determining the fate of men who, even had they been slaves, were free in New York State; also, had not our finest and greatest Chief Justice, John Marshall, ruled at the beginning of the Republic, "The Courts of no country execute the penal laws of another"? One wonders if Noriega's American lawyer quoted Marshall in that travesty of a trial where, after murdering a number of Panamanians in Panama during peacetime, George Bush ordered the kidnapping of the Panamanian leader, Noriega, so that he could be tried in an American court, which had no jurisdiction over him, on charges that should have been brought, if at all, in Panama, an allegedly foreign nation.

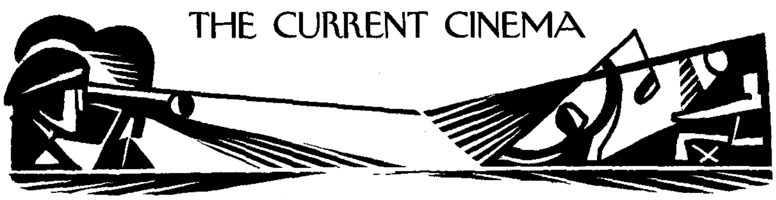
J.Q.A. took much the same tack as Baldwin, but he was out for blood, specifically that of former President Van Buren, whose interference in the case he found intolerable. On March 9th, Associate Justice Joseph Story, of Massachusetts, gave the majority opinion. Apropos J.Q.A.'s defense, he wrote his wife that it was an "extraordinary argument . . . extraordinary . . . for its power, for its bitter sarcasm, and its dealing with topics far beyond the record and points of discussion." Wisely, Story ignored the possible culpability of Van Buren and kept to the issue: Were these free men who had been unlawfully seized and, in self-defense, had freed themselves, a natural right, "the ultimate right of all human beings in extreme cases: to resist oppression, and to apply force against ruinous injustice"? Since it seemed unlikely to the Court that they had intended "to import themselves here as slaves, or for sale as slaves," the mutineers were declared free to go home to Sierra Leone. And so, nearly three years after Cinqué left Africa, he finally achieved this season's wonderful TV word, "closure," which is so akin to death. And now, a hundred and fifty-five years later, he is enjoying posthumous closure, so like resurrection, The Movie.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS ended his days as a beloved national hero. The son of a Founding Father, he must have seemed to his contemporaries an ever-bright link to the first days of the Republic. He loved a good fight and fought the noblest one on offer in his time, earning himself what he regarded as the supreme accolade from a Virginia congressman, who found him "the acutest, the astutest, the archest enemy of Southern slavery."

Adams's last days were very much like the last days of anyone old. He suffered a stroke. He weakened. But he continued to go to the House. On February 21, 1848, he cast his last vote, a "no" in regard to the war upon Mexico. He motioned to the chair that he would like to speak. As he rose, he staggered. Another member caught him before he hit the floor. He was carried into the Speaker's private chamber. For two days, he drifted in and out of consciousness. Then, on February 23rd: "This is the last of earth," he was heard to murmur. "I am composed." Final words. Articulate to the end.

There is, of course, no place for such a man in American politics today—and only through the exercise of a powerful will did Adams make himself so high a place in his own time. Nevertheless, instead of today's whites emptily apologizing for their ancestors' enslavement of the ancestors of black Americans, Congress would be better advised to hire some sculptors with sandblasters and let them loose on Mt. Rushmore so that they can turn the likeness of the war lover Theodore Roosevelt into that of a true hero, John Quincy Adams. The only American historian of the last half century who can safely be called great, William Appleman Williams, particularly revered Adams because, among other things, "he challenged America to become truly unique by mastering its fears. It was Jefferson and his followers who did not face up to the tension that freedom involved. They denied it was possible to be free *and* disciplined. Adams insisted that was the only meaningful definition of freedom. . . . 'The great object of civil government,' Adams declared in his first annual message to the Congress, 'is the improvement of the conditions of those who are parties to the social compact.' "

That says it all, Bill. ♦

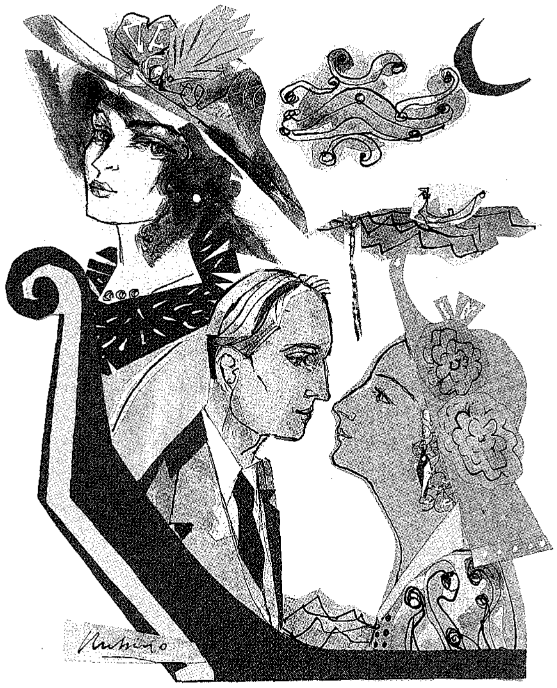


# THE ESCAPE ARTIST

*Henry James's unfilmable passion for renunciation.*

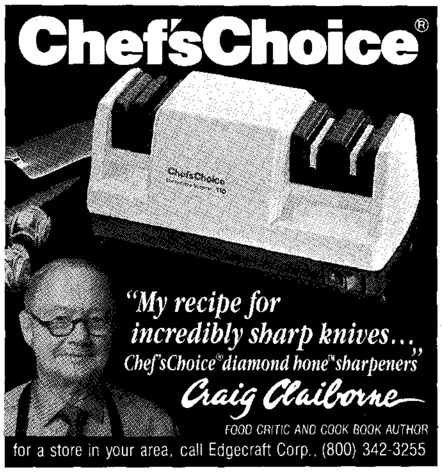
BY DAPHNE MERKIN

THERE is something about Henry James that doesn't warm to the screen—unlike Jane Austen or E. M. Forster, equally literary types who nevertheless lend themselves to the "Lights, camera, action!" urgencies of moviemaking. With Austen, there is the crispness of the dialogue and the essential exteriority of her point of view—the sense that gesture is at least as revealing as intention—which yield to visual transposition, while Forster's bemused outsider's take on things and recognition of the drama of human connection (missed or met) serve to pull the viewer in. But what to do with James, who, by his own admission, had trouble with what he called the "solidity of specification," and whose unique skill was his self-professed "appeal to incalculability"—for intimating, in other words, that which is psychologically most oblique? How to represent in cinematic terms the conflicts of characters conceived by a writer whose greatest interest is the solitary nature of consciousness and whose greatest passion is renunciation? Not that this has stopped admirers of his work (or, rather, those who grasp that his story lines are temptingly strong, even melodramatic, without fully realizing that the true excitement of his plots is all on the inside) from periodically attempting to adapt his writing to film. There was William Wyler's cold and gleaming 1949 production of "The Heiress," based on "Washington Square," and, a galumphing thirty-five years later, Merchant Ivory's careful but strangely pallid rendition of "The Bostonians." Along the way, James's shorter fiction has been a draw to directors as disparate as Jack Clayton, Claude Chabrol, François Truffaut, and Peter Bogdanovich (whose "Daisy Miller" featured a young and fetching Cybill Shepherd as the embodiment of American girlhood). Now, suddenly, beginning with Jane Campion's inventive 1996 direction of "The Portrait of a Lady," we're seeing another burst of interest in capturing the elusive James; there is a new "Washington Square," directed by Agnieszka Holland ("The Secret Garden"), and, out this week, Iain Softley's version of James's majestically interior late novel "The Wings of the Dove."


*A foiled conspiracy: Bonham Carter, Roache, and Elliott are the doomed triangle in "The Wings of the Dove."*

CORNEL RUBINO

Everything about the first half hour or so of "Wings" suggests a confident touch, from the jazzy look of the cred-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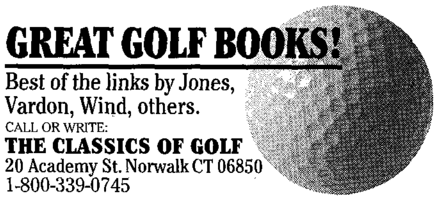
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its (which might just as easily suit a new James Bond movie) to the way it immediately plunges us into the obsessive, erotically driven relationship between the penniless Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter) and the muckraking journalist Merton Densher (Linus Roache). In the opening scene, the two lovers bump into each other on a crowded subway car, and I felt a thrill at the unstuffy anti-period ambience of it—at the unexpected pleasure of watching a pair of hyperattenuated characters out of James having to put up with the grinding realities of the subway rather than the conversational longueurs of a well-appointed drawing room. It sure wasn't Merchant Ivory. A little later, we see Kate receive a phone call at the home of her Aunt Maud (Charlotte Rampling): Softley has moved the time of the story forward by eight years, to 1910, when the London underground had recently been completed and electricity was more prevalent. It's an interesting decision—and a good one, I think—because, without distorting the Jamesian context, Softley succeeds in disembalming the setting just enough to nudge the audience toward a closer identification with the characters.

Kate has been taken up by the wealthy and scheming Aunt Maud, the better to be married off to someone with a suitable bank account and saved from the clutches of her indigent father (Michael Gambon). Part of Maud's bargain with her niece is that Kate renounce her father *and* her romance with Densher. "How long do you think it will last without money?" she demands; it's a question that requires no answer, at least not in the world according to James. Then, at one of Maud's elegant soirées, Kate, dressed in black and pouting madly ("There's far too much going on behind those pretty lashes," Lord Mark, played by Alex Jennings, observes), meets Milly Theale (Alison Elliott), "the world's richest orphan." Milly, who is not only rich but ailing and, better still, American, is fair game for exploitation. She and Kate become fast friends, and Kate soon strikes her own Faustian bargain, in which she persuades Densher, whom Milly has fallen for on sight, to seduce the dying American girl in return for her money—"for her," as Kate puts it, "and for us."

Without getting anything exactly wrong, the film loses its footing somewhere between Milly's entrance and its breathlessly graphic climax, in which a despairing Kate tries to recapture the affection and trust of a disenchanted Densher—now permanently fixated on the memory of the kind and generous Milly—by going to bed with him. The use of full nudity in the scene comes as a shock, but not a particularly effective one, in contrast to the use of the underground and the telephone. The sight of Kate's naked body seems imposed on James's delicately suggestive vision in an unnatural way; it's both unsettling and unsexy. I also don't see how the tagged-on ending, in which Densher goes off to Venice, with or without the benefit of Milly's money (it's left vague), is an improvement on the stark economy of James's original, where we are given to understand, in Kate's final declaration, that she and Densher will never marry: "We shall never be again as we were." The movie's most serious problem, though, is the casting of Alison Elliott as Milly: Elliott, an ex-model, has a brilliant smile, but there aren't nearly enough ripples in her performance to convey Milly's galvanizing goodness, which is the key to what does—and doesn't—happen in James's story.

And yet there is something about "The Wings of the Dove"—perhaps its glorious costumes (designed by Sandy Powell) or all that golden Venice light—that sticks, and made me half forgive its sluggish pace and its miscasting (which also includes Elizabeth McGovern, who, in the role of Milly's friend Susan, has the air of a startled milkmaid). Though it is less true to the spirit of James than "Washington Square," with its dark interiors, ticking clocks, and buttoned-up style, I preferred "Wings." Holland has yanked everything up a tonal notch or two from Wyler's version to accentuate the dissolving ironies of the story; she is good at underlining the emotional and physical discomfort felt by the hoodwinked heiress, Catherine Sloper (Jennifer Jason Leigh, looking irredeemably plain and acting suitably clumsy), and the sleekly ingratiating ways of the fortune-seeking Morris Townsend (Ben Chaplin). But this interpretation of James seems less profound than arbitrarily dismal—as though someone had decided to gaze at life through brown lenses and then wondered bitterly why the color had gone out of everything.

THE problem with filming Henry James is that even the least action-oriented of movies is dependent upon discernible movement and, frame by frame, James's world is close to motionless; even when his characters traipse halfway across the globe, life itself, in his famous phrase, "hangs fire." He reserves his showiest moments for tiny changes in emotional inflection, and encountering him without the armature of his style—those undulating sentences and all-signifying adverbs—is like listening to a lot of muffled screams, or watching people writhe in pain, but far away and under glass. In general, there are no happy endings, and no happy middles, either; there is just longing followed by blundering and frustration. ("The Golden Bowl" is the one novel in which contentment is allowed to carry the day.) Somehow, I don't think James is meant for box-office stardom, which would have saddened him, given his wish for a mass audience. Maybe it's to his credit as a literary artist that he is unfilmable, yet it seems to me that James, who was a lifelong spectator, and probably died a virgin, in 1916, would have loved the vicarious embrace of the movies. ♦

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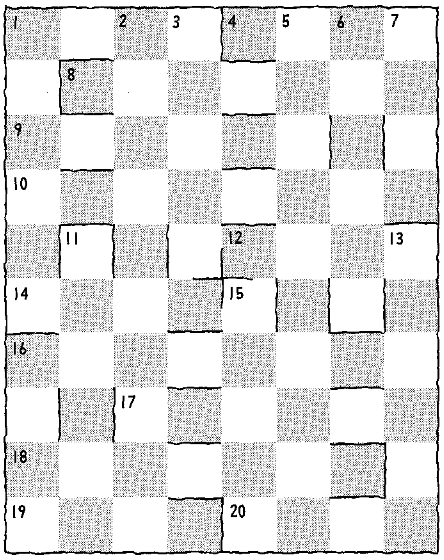
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1 Our group shot Friday on "Dragnet" (4)
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8 Brother holding competition with farmworker (7)
9 Said overcast occasion is best (5-1)
10 Soak two large nuts (8)
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17 "Yes," I pronounced repeatedly (3-3)
18 Number of uniform written in pen (7)
19 Essay about a cafeteria need (4)
20 Observed in an odd way, the germs swarm (4)

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2 European city is into punk rock (10)
3 Bachelor lair in German region (5)
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6 Flier's cheer about carnival site (6)
7 Ringer leaving heartlessly (4)
11 Someone with a club about to strike back (6)
13 Cracked my clue in school (6)
15 Starts from scratch, picturing each night that's passed (5)
16 Point of changing seat (4)

• •

*The solution to puzzle No. 20 appears on page 119. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.*

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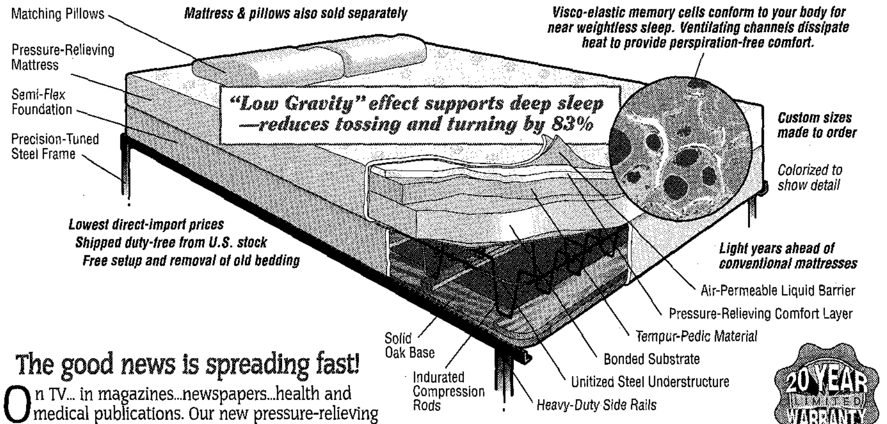
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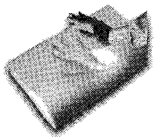

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# SHOUTS & MURMURS

## JAVA JIVE

BY BRUCE McCALL

Dear Madam Attorney General: Janet, this videotape gefuffle, we need closure. Hillary and I must get back to the school-uniform bill and other urgent legislation. Of course, *you're* the A.G., not me, even if I did appoint you—but, just wondering aloud, have you and your fine team ever considered:

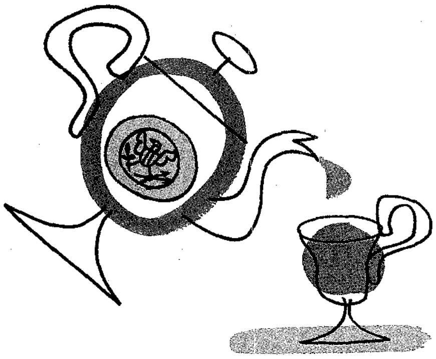
(a) That it wasn't me at all in those White House videotapes but "Tricky Dick" Nixon in a rubber Clinton mask, up to his old political mischief? I'd launch a full investigation if I were you. Go out to Yorba Linda, wait by the headstone three or four years. Just a suggestion, Janet!

(b) That it *was* me in those videotapes, but so overloaded with caffeine from endless cups of java that I was cuckoo gaga, motormouthing a lot of nonsense, throwing around dollar amounts and making wild promises? A clear-cut case of temporary insanity, so who needs an Independent Counsel? Heck, a little ole doctor's note would do.

As you know, Janet, Asia's population is exploding bigger than an Arkansas land deal. What if there's no more room left at home and all those Chinese, Taiwanese, and Indonesian folks the cameras show milling around inside the White House were newly arrived, very *thirsty* refugees, just begging the President—the Population Explosion President, that's how I hope to be remembered—for something, anything, to drink? Janet, I bet even an Independent Counsel is good people enough to drop all charges and pitch right in, serving up the Folger's.

My Chelsea: You know, Janet, that this kid has a heart as big as Hope, Arkansas. It just could be that on a recent Far East good-will tour she invited everybody she met to come on over and visit the White House for coffee sometime. And darned if they didn't all show up on the same day! It'd take one awful mean Independent Counsel, not to mention an indecisive, flip-flop, poker-faced Attorney General, to go harassing an innocent child, Janet, now, wouldn't it?

Janet, can I share something with you in complete confidence? I suffer from a glandular condition that constantly threatens to blow me up to five or six times my normal size. Maybe you've noticed. What you may *not* know, Janet, is that my good friend Johnny Chung introduced me to some Chinese high-priest folks who've been coming over to teach me their secret ancient Coffee Ceremony weight-reducing ritual. I'm cured, Janet! But they also told me I can never reveal the secret to anyone—not even an Independent Counsel—or I'll explode. So, Janet, just between us, mum's the word!



Speaking of China, I've taken the liberty of sending you and everybody on Senator Thompson's subcommittee a videocassette of a brand-new movie made there by some folks I know. The title is something like "I Was Not There and Anyway I Hate Coffee." It's a parable set in the Ming Dynasty, all about this emperor, his treacherous court, mob rule, and the tricks videotape can play on reality. Fascinating. Hope you enjoy it, Janet!

But let me put a little "bug in your ear" about something else I flat forgot to mention. Now, I know this may sound a bit far-fetched, but sometimes we just have to take things on faith. Faith, as you know, Janet, is the bedrock of this nation. Anyway, imagine if aliens replaced the President of the United States with a look-alike zombie android, programmed to gain control of the whole human race, beginning with "A," for "Asians"! Just stay with me a minute now, doll. He—or should I say "it"—lures all these Asian folks into the White House to drink coffee laced with a mind-altering space chemical that turns them into slaves. But then the First Lady stumbles on the real President, bound and gagged in a broom closet. They call in the C.I.A. to laser-zap the zombie android, and the plot's quashed. But to avoid mass panic the whole affair is kept super-secret. Not even the Attorney General is told. Or will *ever* tell, once she's let in on it. Not if she's a true American patriot, Janet, and not some clueless frump from the sticks who's in way over her head.

So there we are, a mess of exculpatory evidence hotter than a plate of grits at a Little Rock fund-raiser. If I know my Attorney General, she's not the wishy-washy, temporizing political stooge some surly folks say she is, spun like a weathervane by conflicting pressures, and with all the style sense of Kramer on "Seinfeld." And she's not quite ready to go back to sweltering in a lean-to in the middle of some Florida swamp. She'll know what to do. Speaking of what to do: Why not come by the private quarters tonight? I'm putting on coffee for some old friends I'd sure like you to meet. —All My Best, Bill ♦

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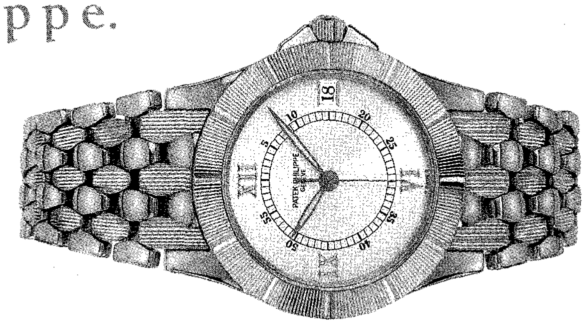

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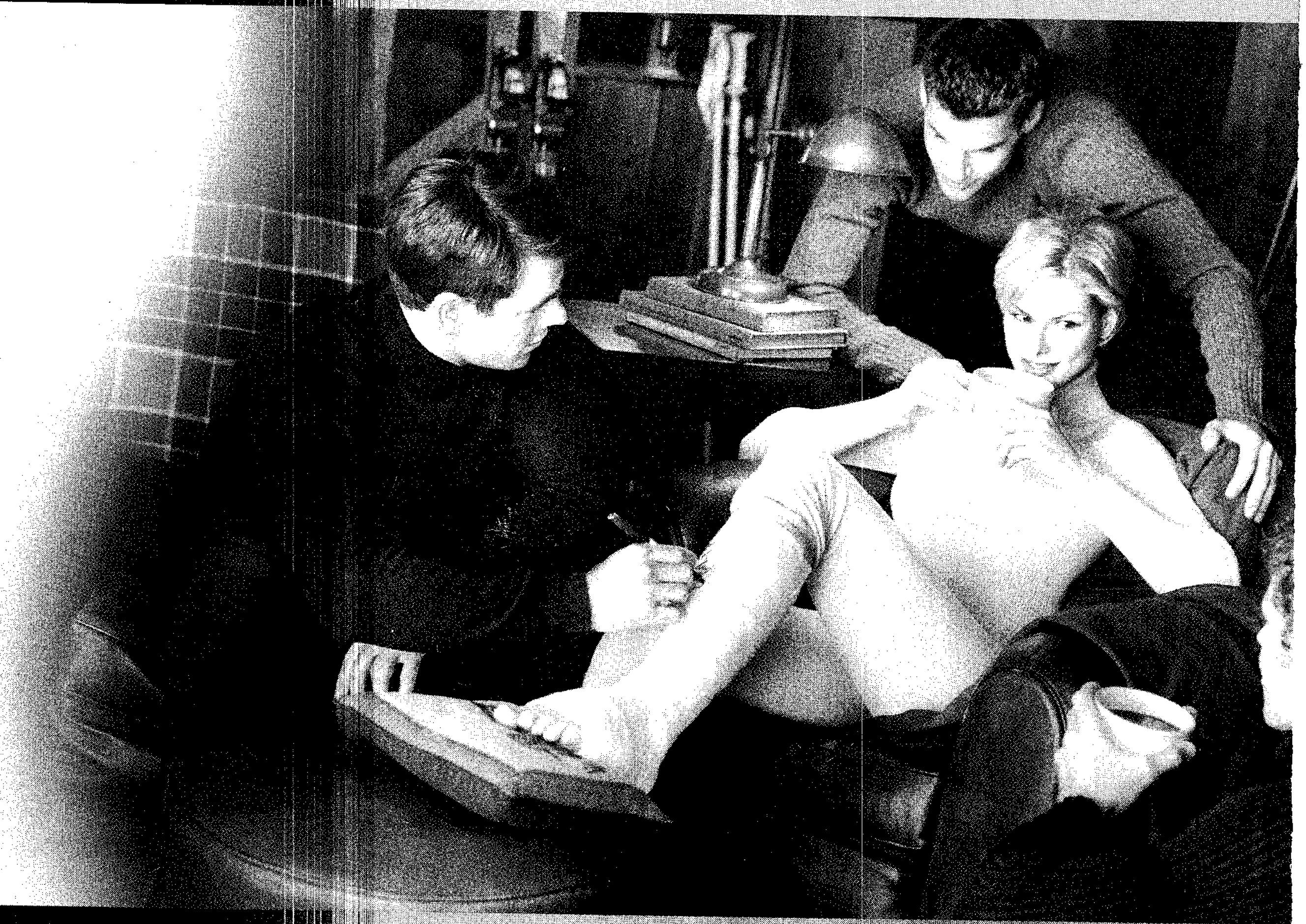

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